

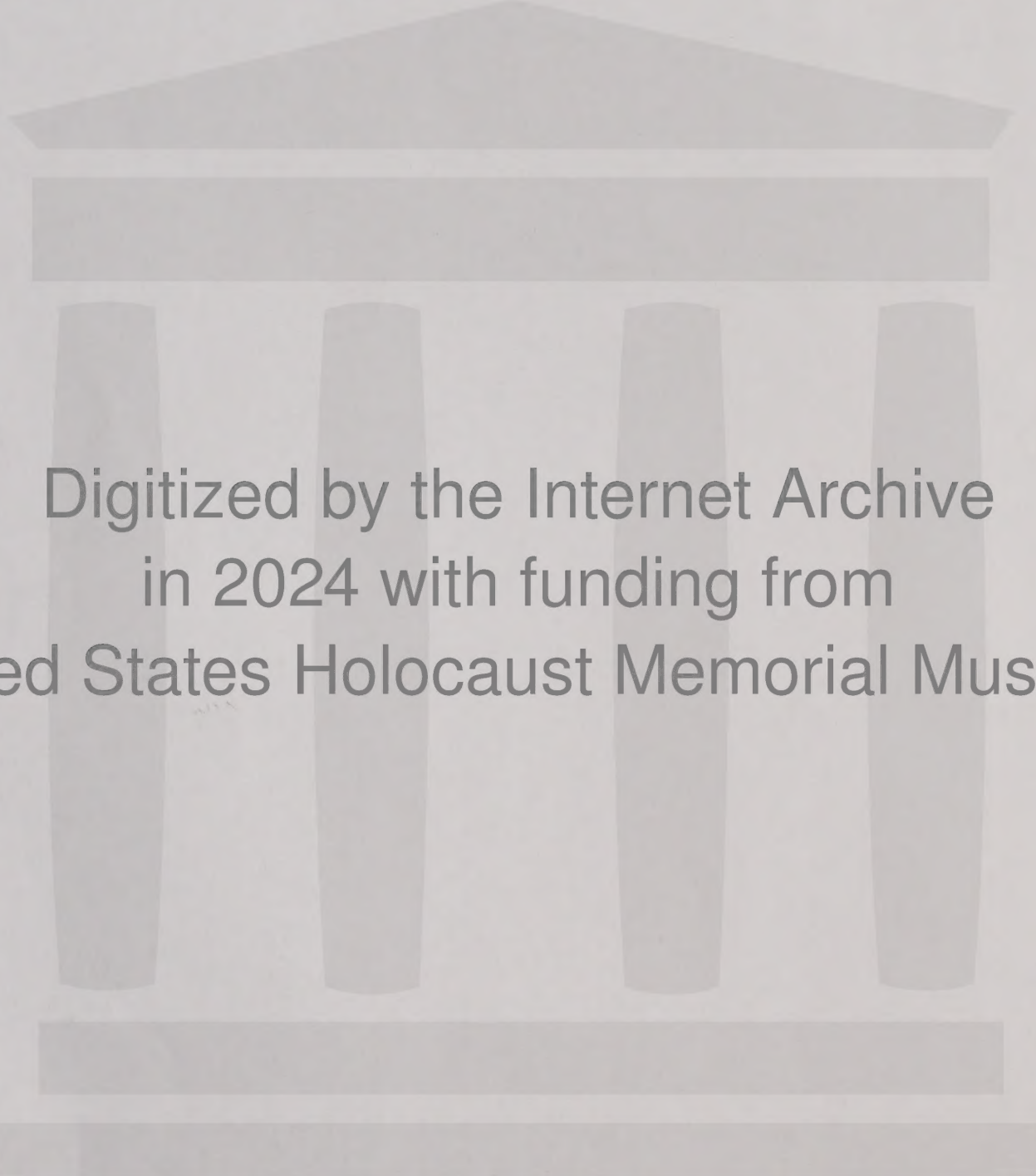


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THE LONELY VOICE OF THE LITTLE BOY
OR
TO HELL AND BACK
OR
WHO WILL COME WITH A SWORD...
(Version III)

By Semyon E. Royzman

INTRODUCTION

We will tell you here about only a few episodes of survival of a little boy during the Holocaust and the Great Patriotic War/WWII. The title of this story stems from the fact that most of his 3 years of survival, the boy did not have anybody to speak to: he had been too little at the beginning of the events, or, later, surrounded by sick unconscious people, or ... by dead bodies. So, the only partner of his conversations was the boy himself, or his lonely voice...

There are actually three lines of the narration:

- The boy's survival during the war and the Holocaust.
- Background of events, i.e. some descriptions of survival of the boy's motherland – the USSR in a few major battles of the war, in which **every seventh citizen of his country – a staggering total of 27 million people! – had been killed in battles, bombings/shellings, or died from wounds, or annihilated in ghettos and concentration camps...** (Only in the author's family 6 men – in their best years of life and abilities – had been killed in battles, and more than twice as many women, children and elderly died in ghetto and extermination camp).
- The third line of the narration reflects the (so to say) “diplomacy” during the war, and is expressed through the correspondence between Prime Ministers of the USSR and Britain I. V. Stalin and W. Churchill, and also between I. V. Stalin and T. Roosevelt (the USA President). That correspondence reflected not only diplomacy, but basically the positions of those countries and actual participation in the war, and contribution of each of the three countries in the victory over Nazi Germany and Nazism.
The proportion of that participation becomes clear by **comparison of the losses in the war: about 486 thousand people for the USA against 27 million for the USSR.**

The second and especially the third line of the narration would help the reader to understand **WHY** the war lasted **SO LONG and WHY** its results in human losses – especially in civilian losses and **in the HOLOCAUST – were SO CATASTROPHIC.**

The narration structure is as follows: first is introduced an episode of the boy's survival, which is followed by a simultaneous event(s) in the war. Then the war event(s) is followed by a piece (or a few) of the correspondence in an attempt of a simultaneous chronology.

An outstanding role in the Victory over Nazi Germany and Nazism was played by Vice Supreme Commander (second after I. V. Stalin) of the Soviet Armed Forces – Marshal

Georgiy Konstantinovich Zjukov. “He inflicted on the Germans more losses than ANY military commander or a group of them in WWII... The Germans had been more than familiar with the name and crashing mastery of Zjukov because in front of them was a Military Genius” (Martin Kayden “Tigers are burning”, 1974)

Naturally, the events of the boy’s survival had been directly or indirectly a result of the war events. The author of those memoirs clearly understood from his own fate and from a library of literature about the Great Patriotic War/WWII that if not for the Courage, Brave Endurance, Iron-Will and Military Genius of Marshal Zjukov and the armed forces under his command, he (the author) and many millions like him would have NOT SURVIVED.

On a larger scale, had Germany taken over the USSR, it would have led to their total global domination and the US might not be an exclusion. So, the contribution that Zjukov made not only to his motherland, but to the entire world is unfathomable.

Turning to the events of the third line of this narration it is necessary to point out the following. British Prime Minister W. Churchill in his personal message to I.V. Stalin of July 8, 1941 expressed in exalted words his admiration with the courageous actions and resistance of the Soviet Army and people to the Nazi invaders. Mr. Churchill promised to do everything possible to help the USSR in its struggle against Nazi Germany. Churchill and his government understood that as long as the Soviet Union fights the German invasion, Britain does not have to worry: Germany would not be able to fight on two fronts. So, Churchill’s task was (to him) clear and simple: to provide the USSR with some material/weaponry help – to keep alive the Soviet struggle against Germany.

In his answer to Churchill’s message of July 8, 1941 Stalin requested the opening of the Second Front (in Northern France or/and in the North) emphasizing that this would be good (and first of all for Britain) to do at the moment because the majority of the German army is concentrated on the Soviet – German Front.

In response, Churchill “offered” all kinds of excuses actually rejecting (in “nice words”!) Stalin’s request and saying that “next year” may be better for the opening of the Second Front. That response was the foundation of “the feet dragging” policy with the Second Front by the western allies, i.e. Britain and the USA.

It took three **very long and very bloody years** between Stalin’s original request and the actual opening of the Second Front. During that time Mr. Churchill kept “offering” excuses, explanations and apologies for **NOT opening** of the Second Front, which **would accelerate the defeat of the Nazis**. And during those years millions of people kept unnecessary dying on the Soviet – German Front and in ghettos and concentration camps.

In one of his letters to I. V. Stalin, Churchill even complained that, in addition to the Middle East, British forces are stretched along Iran, India, Burma, etc. And without that presence the situation of Britain would be catastrophic.

What would really be catastrophic for Britain is if the Soviet Union would be defeated and Hitler would turn his hordes against Britain.

It took only a few weeks for the huge military machine of Nazi Germany to put France on its knees. This would never happen if France and Britain would agree to conduct a preventive blow against Germany, proposed by the Soviet Union during the three-sided military negotiations between Britain, France and the USSR in August 1939, when the war had been already unfolded by Germany.

If that blow would be accomplished, there would NOT be a WWII and a Holocaust on the CATASTROPHIC scale which actually happened.

But, instead of using common sense, France (Daladie) and Britain (Chamberlen) played “political” games, pushing Hitler against the USSR and forgetting that at the appropriate moment Nazi Germany could turn against them, what actually happened.

While Mr. Churchill and most of his fellow – citizens during those “feet dragging” years led a comfortable and secure life, **we – the prisoners of the ghettos and concentration camps had been annihilated by harsh labor, beatings, unhealing wounds, infections, severe cold, starvation and horror...**

And the voice of the little boy, struggling for survival in the wild ocean of blood and horror during those endless years, reminded lonely...

The Lonely Voice of the Little Boy

I. Mogilyov-Podol'sk Town

I see scenes of Mogilyov and Ataki in winter and summer. A peaceful 14th century town with gardens, palaces, churches, synagogues, beautiful hills, and Carpathian Mountains on the opposite side of the Dniester River...

We lived here for 4 - 5 centuries...

Greeks, Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, Moldavians, Hungarians, Bulgarians and many others lived in this town for centuries...

Many buildings, assemblies and estates in the town had nice architecture: beautiful, forged gates, marble and cast-metal sculptural works, outstanding stain glass...

Mogilyov knew good and bad times. Over the centuries the town had connections to many European countries because of its location, and the roads running through it, including the Dniester River. That helped the town maintain intensive communication with the West as well as the East: commerce, culture, and science. This explains (to a certain degree) why many of my relatives from Mogilyov at the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century obtained higher education in the best European Universities, and some of them never returned to their hometown...

II. Hi-Ski Dreams and Cruel Reality...

My name is Senya (or, as the adults used to call me, Senechka- nickname). Today is 1941, and I am 7 years old. A few times I saw in the sky a peaceful airplane over the peaceful life of our peaceful town. I was so amazed with its ability to fly, that I decided to become an air plane designer... I could not imagine what kind of horror those air planes could bring...

Somewhere else, in Nazi Germany, the mad "furer" is giving inflammatory speeches. Grimaces on his face (better to call it muzzle) are changing with a speed and variety, of which even a mad dog would become envious. He (the "furer") is building air armadas, which soon will destroy Warsaw, Kiev, Leningrad, and Mogilyov...

The Invasion

Somewhere else, on June 21, 1941 at 24.00 p.m., general M.P. Kirponos - Commander of the Kiev Military District, reported by radio from his Commanding Station in Ternopol', that a German soldier, who swam across the Dniester River, came to the Soviet border patrol and informed them, that at 4.00 a.m. on June 22, 1941 the German Army would attack the Soviet Union. General Zjukov had reported this to Stalin at 00.30 on June 22, 1941. Stalin asked if the order on immediate upbringing the border military forces into the highest preparation had been passed to the Army. Zjukov's answer was positive.

At 3.07 General Zjukov received a call from Admiral F.S. Oktyabrskiy, who reported that a large group of unknown military plains are approaching from the sea the Chernomorski (Black Sea) fleet. The fleet is fully prepared. "I am asking for directives"- said the Admiral. "Your decision?"- asked Zjukov. "Only one: to meet the air crafts with the fire of the anti-air crafts defense system of the fleet". "Act and report to your Minister"-said Zjukov. At 3.30 a.m. General V.E. Klimovskih - Commander of the Western Military District, reported on the attack of the German aviation of Belorussian cities. Three minutes later General M.A Purkaev - Chief of Staff of the Kiev Military District, reported on the attack of the German aviation of Ukrainian cities. At 3.40 a.m. General F.I. Kuznetsov - Commander of the Baltic Military District reported that the German aviation bombed Kaunas and other cities. The Defense Minister S.K. Timoshenko ordered G.K.Zjukov to call Stalin. Zjukov calls. Nobody answers the phone. Zjukov calls continuously. Finally Zjukov hears the sleepy voice of General Vlasik (Stalin's personal security Commander):

- *Who speaks?*
- *General Zjukov. Please, immediately connect me with comrade Stalin.*
- *What? Right now?- the Security Commander was amazed. -Comrade Stalin is sleeping.*
- *Wake him up immediately: the Germans are bombing our cities, the War started.*

The silence lasts a few moments. Finally the voice on the other side said:

-Wait.

About three minutes later Stalin answered the phone. Zjukov reported the situation, and asked for permission to start counteractions. Stalin is silent. Zjukov hears only Stalin's heavy breathing.

-Did you understand me?

Again, silence.

- Do you have any directives? - insists Zjukov. Finally Stalin asked:

- Where is Timoshenko (then Minister of Defense)?

- On the phone with the Kiev Military District.

- Come with him to the Kremlin. Tell Poskrebyshev (Stalin's Secretary) to call all members of the Politburo.

At 4.00 Zjukov spoke again with Admiral Oktyabrskiy, who calmly reported, that the enemy's attack had been beat off. The enemy's attempt to sink our military ships had been ruined, but there are destroyed buildings in the city (Sevastopol').

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III. June 22, 1941: "Grandma! The War Began!!! Molotov is On the Radio!"

There is a beautiful June morning. I am playing in the yard, overlooking the Dniester River. It is about 9 am, and the neighbor next door (Dr. Schol'nik's wife) invites me to taste a piece of pastry, which she is making. The radio in their living room is on loudly. And all of a sudden, the radio speaker announced: "Important Governmental announcement! Comrade Molotov will speak!"

The face of Mrs. Schol'nik changes to pale. Usually Dr. and Mrs. Schol'nik are very well aware of all national and international events. Dr. Schol'nik and my grandpa frequently discuss international politics. Mrs. Schol'nik stops near the radio, awaiting for Molotov's speech. He begins: "Dear Comrades! Citizens of the Soviet Union! Brothers and Sisters! This morning at 3.30 am Nazi Germany perfidiously attacked our country! The Nazi aviation bombed Minsk, Kiev and other cities of the USSR!"...

I left the Schol'nik's house, and run to tell my grandma the news...

...During the next few days Mogilyov changes. More and more military groups could be seen moving through the town. Families of frontier officers had been evacuated to the East. Nazi bombers had been attacking the town even during daytime, trying to destroy the railroad bridge over the Dniester River, and the underground fortification structures along that river...

The Invasion (Continuation 1)

...Somewhere else in the world, the Nazi war machine crashed the thin frontier forces of the Red Army, and started to quickly advance into the Soviet territory...

...Shortly before those events, at the end of May, 1941, S.K. Timoshenko (the USSR Minister of Defense) and G.K. Zjukow (Chief of Staff of the Soviet Army) had been invited to the Politburo. Stalin advised them:

-The German ambassador passed to us the request of the German Government to allow the Germans to search for the graves of German soldiers and officers, killed during WWI in battles with the old Russian Army. Please, provide the necessary control so that the Germans would not expand their search beyond the areas, indicated on this map.

Zjukov and Timoshenko had been shocked on one hand by the cynicism and insolence of the German Government, and, on the other hand, by the unexplainable trust of Stalin.

- Do you have any comments?*
- The Germans are going simply to investigate the areas, where they are planing to attack,- Zjukov said. - Their version concerning graves search is too primitive.*

Timoshenko added:

-Lately, the Germans frequently violate our air space, and fly deeply into our territory. Zjukov and I are convinced that the German Plains must be brought down.

- The German ambassador assured us in Hitler's name, that they have in their aviation too many young people, who are not well oriented in the air. Because of that, the ambassador asked us not to pay too much attention to their wandering planes,- Stalin argued.*

Zjukov and Timoshenko disagreed, and continued insisting, that the German air plains are purposely flying too low over the Soviet most important objects with an obvious goal to study those objects in detail.

- OK,- suddenly said Stalin,- in such a case it is necessary to immediately prepare a Note on that subject, requiring from Hitler to stop immediately their military's "selfinitiative". I am not sure that Hitler is aware of those flights.*

In June, the Germans increased even more the air reconnaissance activity of their aviation. Different sabotage and intelligence groups more and more frequently penetrated into the Soviet territory. In addition to personal reports, Zjukov and Timoshenko prepared a written Report on the subject matter with a map, on which they indicated the areas and directions of the air reconnaissance activity of the Germans. They asked for concrete directives.

I.V. Stalin answered:

- Pass to Vyshinsky (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) all the incidents of Soviet Border violation. He would be dealing with the German ambassador.

... Shortly before the invasion, Zjukov and Timoshenko proposed to Stalin and insisted to build-up a strong force on the Western borders of the USSR.. But Stalin rejected their proposal with a motivation that such a build-up would provoke the Nazi's invasion. Stalin was desperately trying to delay this invasion, and to win time for the country's preparation to it...

...In a short while it was found, that before sunrise on June 22, 1941, the telephone connections between the troops and Headquarters in all Soviet Western Military Districts had been destroyed. As a result, the headquarters of the Districts and armies could not quickly pass to the troops directives and orders. The German sabotage groups, inserted into the Soviet territory prior to the invasion, not only destroyed the telephone cable communications, but also attacked and killed the delegates, who tried to restore these communications. Radio communication devices introduced only a small part in the Soviet Army at that time...

During the first 72 hours of the invasion, the Soviet Airforce was practically destroyed in their airports. The airplanes became easy targets since they were located in the open fields, not in hangars...

But neither Senechka, nor the rest of the country would know that...

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IV. The Night of Armageddon

Every night since the start of bombing of Mogilyov, neighbors gathered in each others houses/apartments. That unforgettable night we (my grandmother, my aunt and myself) came to our neighbors on the first floor next door apartment building. Here, I was given a place to slip on a bed near a window, overlooking the Dniester River. Outside that window there were steps, connecting the floors of the building with each other. I am falling asleep under a muffled discussion of the adults. They speak quietly, like they are afraid, that the Nazi pilots will overhear them, and immediately start to drop bombs...

... I see a dream... Suddenly, the World exploded and starts to fall apart with an unspeakable thunder... The sky, the mountains - everything is falling apart under this horrifying thunder... It seems, that this demolition of the World will never end... But, suddenly, it stops... The "picture" changes, and everything becomes now foggy and

smoky... The only thing, which is clear is a huge crater, and I am sliding down the slope of that crater...

...When I open my eyes, I see the dark sky with the stars over me... I am buried in the ruins of what a couple hours ago was a beautiful building... Only my head sticks out above the ruins...

I hear around me moans of the ones, who are still alive. I also see a shed of somebody carefully moving over the ruins in the dark with a flashlight. I recognize the voice of my grandfather. He frees me from the debris, checks my head and the rest of my body. I do not have any open wounds. Grandpa asks me if I feel any pain. All of the damage is still to be discovered later...

Now we together unearth my grandma and my aunt. They are both alive, but very badly wounded. They cannot move. We are carrying them to our house.

In the dark I am stepping over somebody's body and fell. I recognize the dead body of a gentleman, who was together with us in the same room... Steel beams of the flight of stairs fell across his body and smashed his neck and legs...

...When we finally arrive in our house, I see a horrifying picture of my grandma: Her entire face is a bloody mass. Her spine was broken. The cloth on her right hip is soaked with blood... She is moaning, trying to suppress the unbearable pain...

All windows in our house are shattered. Everything is covered with shattered glass.

We run across the street to advise the person, responsible for handling emergency situations in our block. His house is equipped with a telephone. He calls the emergency.

Shortly after that the ambulance car arrives. The emergency crew approaches my grandma, and uncovers her body. Everything is soaked with blood, and I see her right hip destroyed, and her white thigh-bone bare...

The doctors perform first aid to my grandma, and we help them to carry her and my aunt to the ambulance car... They had been evacuated from Mogilyov-Podolsk by the last railroad track the same night together with hundreds of other victims of the Armageddon...

The Invasion (Continuation 2)

...Almost three weeks passed since the Invasion. By that time, the Nazi troops advanced into the Soviet territory by as much as 500 to 600 kilometers. During that time the Nazi troops lost about 100 thousand people, over 1,000 airplanes, and about 50% of the tanks, which participated in the invasion.

The losses of the Soviet Army for that time had been not less impressive. 28 Soviet divisions, had been surrounded, and could not get out from the surroundings. A large contingent of the surrounded troops had been taken as hostages. Those, who were not captured as hostages, adopted partisan methods of war. Almost 70 divisions suffered from heavy losses, and needed reinforcements.

The situation was especially severe in the Soviet aviation... But the most important loss was the capture by the enemy important economical regions and strategic objects. Hitler and his surrounding considered, that the USSR "practically lost the war". When general Paulus reported to Hitler about possible difficulties to provide the German troops in Russia in winter conditions, Hitler exploded: "I don't want to hear those conversations... there will be no winter war. Entrust it to my diplomatic qualifications. The army must inflict on the Russians only a couple powerful blows... and then you will see that the Russian giant is standing on earthenware legs".

During WWII between the Heads of States of the USSR Stalin, Great Britain Churchill, USA Roosevelt took place an intensive letter communication. It reflected the position of these countries and their actions at different moments of the War. It also explains, in particular, the longevity of WWII and the number of victims, especially the number of murdered in the concentration camps. This communication is very important, and is incorporated here in a chronological order

1

Received July 8, 1941

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

We all here are very glad that the Russian armies render such a strong, courageous and manly resistance to the absolutely unprovoked and ruthless invasion of the Nazis. The courage and persistence of the Soviet soldiers and the people excite a universal admiration. We will do everything to help You, as much as time, geographical conditions and our growing resources would allow us. The longer the war will last the greater help we would be able to provide. The English Airforce conduct during the day and night large raids on all occupied by Germany territories and on Germany itself in the limits of rich. About 400 airplanes conducted yesterday daytime raids on the other side of the sea. On Saturday evening over 200 heavy bombers conducted raids over German cities. Some of them carried bombs weighing three tones; last night in the operations participated around 250 heavy bombers. This is going to continue in times ahead. We hope in such a way to force Hitler to turn part of his air force to the West and gradually to relieve the burden carried by Your country. In addition, on my request the Admiralty prepared a serious operation, which it will be conducting in the nearest future in the Arctic region, after that, I hope, will be established a contact between the Britain and Russian navies. In the meantime in the operations near the Norwegian coasts we captured different transportation ships, which have been moving to the North against Your country. We welcome the arrival of the Russian Military Mission with the purpose of coordination of future planes.

We need only to continue to put all the forces to kick out the spirit from the villains.

V. We leave Mogilyov-Podol'sk

Early in the morning we (my grandpa, my grandaunt and myself) are walking along our street, which stretches along the Dniester River. Actually, there is no street anymore: the side of the street, overlooking the Dniester river, is unrecognizable, demolished by the barbarian Nazi bombing. Three-four story buildings, richly decorated with beautiful forged-steel balconies, marble and granite sculptural works, are lying in ruins.

Some of the buildings are split in halves, and beds, sofas, etc., are overhanging over ready to fall down floors... All that is surreal to me... It seems, that this is still just a bad dream, that next moment I will wake up, and everything will be OK... The street, along which I happily walked many-many times with my grandpa, grandma and others, was carried away by Armageddon...

... We found my uncle's family alive and well. Fortunately, the bombing did not affect their area. After a short consideration, my grandpa and my uncle decided to leave the city right away because of the expected repeat of the bombing.

The railroad bridge over the Dniester river was destroyed last night, so there will be no trains from Bessarabia. The local radio announced, that the last railroad truck left Mogilyov last night. There was no other transportation to get out of Mogilyov...

In a short while, we walked out of Mogilyov with what was on us and what we could carry in our hands...

We joined a crowd, leaving the city. We directed our way toward a little town called Chernevtsy, located 20 miles from Mogilyov, where we had some remote relatives. We hoped, that during our short stay there, the Soviet Army would be able to force back the Nazi German army, and we would be able to return to Mogilyov soon...

First Counterblows against the Nazis

...Somewhere else in the World, under the energetic commandment of the Chief of Staff of the Soviet Military Forces Army General Zjukov against the enemy had been unfolded the troops of five armies of the Western Front. As a result, on July 13, 1941 the 21st Army delivered a blow against the German's group of armies "Center". The 21st Army crossed the Dnieper River, liberated from the Nazis the cities Rogachov and Zjlobin, and continued to attack in the northwestern direction.

... On the Moscow and Kiev directions the Nazis experienced great losses. Between their "Center" and "South" groups of armies appeared a large gap. General Zjukov decided to take advantage on that situation. On July 20, 1941, Zjukov transferred a Directive to the Commander of the Western Front to perform an operation on surrounding and annihilation of the enemy in the Smolensk region. For that purpose, from the Reserve of The Supreme Command of the Soviet Army had been organized five groups. Those five groups were intended to deliver simultaneously blows from northeast, East and south in the general direction to Smolensk City.

Unfortunately, those groups did not act in accord in addition to being spread out over wide areas of the front. As a result, their attacks did not provide the expected effect. However, this operation forced the German armies to convert from offense to defense on the Moscow direction. That was the first case from the start of World War II, when the wermaht had been forced to turn to defense on a Major Strategic Direction.

2

Received July 10, 1941

Strictly confidential

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

Immediately after receiving from Mr. Stafford Kripps the report about his conversation with You and about the proposed during it the English-Soviet coordinated declaration, incorporating two items, i.e.:

- a) mutual aid without precise definition of its size or character and
- b) obligation of each side not to conclude a separate peace,

I immediately called a meeting of the Britain Military Cabinet with the participation of the Prime Minister of the dominion New Zealand Mr. Freezer currently visiting London. As You will understand, we would need to ask the opinion of the dominions - Canada, Australia and South Africa. Meanwhile, I would like to assure You that we totally approve the proposal regarding the coordinated English - Soviet declaration. We consider that signing the declaration should happen immediately after receiving the answers from the governments of the dominions and that immediately after that the declaration should be made public.

3

Personal Message from Stalin to Mr. Churchill

Let me thank You for both of your personal messages. Your messages established the beginning of an agreement between our governments. Now, as You expressed yourself with complete grounds, the Soviet Union and Great Britain became military allies in the struggle with Hitler's Germany. I do not have any doubts, that our states would find enough forces to demolish our common enemy in spite of all the difficulties.

It might be not unnecessary to advise You, that the situation of the Soviet force4s on the front continues to be stressful. The results of the unexpected break by Hitler of the non-aggression pact and the unexpected invasion into the Soviet Union, which created for the German armed forces an advantageous situation, is still having an effect on the situation of the Soviet forces. We can imagine that the situation of the German forces would be many times more advantageous, should the Soviet forces take the blow of the German forces not in the regions of Kishinyov, L'vov, Brest, Kaunas and Vyborg, but in the regions of Odessa, Kamenets-Podol'sk, Minsk and Leningrad.

It seems to me, further, that the military situation of the Soviet Union, as well as the Great Britain, would be significantly improved, if it would be created a front against Hitler in the West (Northern France) and in the North (Arctic).

The front in the North of France not only would be able to pull Hitler's forces from the East, but would make impossible Hitler's invasion into England. Creation of such a front would be popular in the army of Great Britain as well as in the entire population of the Southern England. I can imagine the difficulty of creation of such a front, but it seems to me that, in spite of the difficulties, such a front should be created not only for our common cause, but for the interests of England itself. It is easiest of all to create such a front just now when Hitler's forces are distracted to the East and when Hitler did not yet have a chance to fasten the positions captured in the East.

It is even easier than that to create a front in the North. Here would be required only the actions of the English navy and air force without landing and without putting ashore artillery. In such an operation would participate Soviet land forces, navy and airforce formations. We would hail, if Great Britain would be able to deliver here about one light division, or more Norwegian volunteers, which could be landed in the Northern Norway for striking actions against the Germans.

July 18, 1941.

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VI. We are hunted by a Nazi military airplane ...

... We walked along the country road on our way to Chernevtsy. Suddenly, a Nazi military aircraft appeared in the air over the road.

The aircraft was high enough in the air so that one would not expect the pilot to see a small group of people below on the road...

We had been walking along the edge of a wheat field. The aircraft passed over us. It then returned, flying at a lower elevation, and opened fire at us from a machine-gun...

... We dispersed, and laid down into the wheat. The aircraft kept returning, sinking lower and lower, and shooting at us with long machine-gun bursts.

Finally, the aircraft was flying so low, that we could see the physiognomy of the pilot in the helmet. The high-tech barbarian was hunting us... He, obviously, was enjoying shooting unarmed, defenseless, innocent children, women, men... A "worthy" son of a "civilized" nation...

Zjukov's offensive proposal – Dangerous meeting with Stalin

...Somewhere else, the Headquarters of the German Army evaluated the situation on the Moscow direction as follows: "Thus, the enemy is getting one month of time in order to enforce its defense position Western to Moscow, and, simultaneously, repulses our offensive, which is being conducted in August with lack of forces. This way, he (the enemy) achieved something very important for him. Constantly threatening our flanks, the enemy split the integrity of our forces. Simultaneously, he excluded for a few weeks the threat to Moscow, and in that way, achieved a big political success".

As soon as General Zjukov received the report, that the Germans are turning to defense, he immediately decided, that at that moment the German Command will turn a part of their forces to the South. Once again, he meticulously weighed all the factors, checked his calculations, and assuring himself in adequacy of his own prognostications, decided to report them to the Supreme Commander J.V. Stalin.

On July 29, 1941 Zjukov called Stalin, and asked him about an appointment for an urgent report.

-Come ...

Zjukov took maps with the contemporary situation and other required information, and stepped into Stalin's office. Stalin was not alone - he was talking to Mehlis.

- What do you have, report, - said Stalin to Zjukov, interrupting the conversation with Mehlis.

Zjukov, without a hurry, thinking over the final version of the report, placed the maps on the table, and reported in detail the situation on the fronts, and pictured the character of the assumed actions of the enemy.

Stalin, as usual, paced the room slowly, with wide steps, waddled. From time to time, he approached the table, and fixedly overlooked the maps on the table, peered into the smallest signs on the maps.

-How do you know, how the German troops will act? - suddenly and biting asked Mehliş. Addressing to Stalin, Zjukov said:

- I am not aware of the plans, according to which the German troops will be acting, but, based on the analysis of the current situation, they, most likely, will be acting as I reported, and not in any other way.*

Heavy oppressive silence filled the office.

- Continue,- interrupted the silence Stalin, smoking his pipe.

- In the direction of Moscow in the nearest future the Germans would not be able to conduct large offensive operations because of our counterblows they suffered here too great losses. The German Command does not possess large strategic reserves to secure the flanks of the "Center" group of armies. In the Baltic direction, without additional forces they are not capable to start an operation for capturing Leningrad. In the Ukraine, the Germans can attack from the region of Dnepropetrovsk, Kremenchug, where now is being positioned the 1st Tank Group of Kleist. The weakest area of our defense is Konotop and Gomel'. Here, the Nazis would be able to turn a portion of forces of the "Center" Group of armies, and to conduct a blow into a flank and rear of General Kirponos troops.*

-What do you suggest?- suspiciously looked at him Stalin.

- I suggest,- Zjukov answered with pressure,- to relocate the South-Western front behind the Dnieper River ... It will be necessary to give up Kiev in order to save Kirponos's troops while that is still possible. And on the Western direction to immediately organize a powerful blow, while the Germans there are weakened, with the goal to liquidate the El'ninskiy projection...*

Stalin, in rage, interrupted Zjukov:

- What kind of counterblows are you talking about? What a nonsense! And how could you come up with the "idea" to surrender Kiev to the enemy?*

Zjukov sharply became pale, and not restraining himself, sharply uttered distinctly:

- If you think that I, as Chief of General Headquarters of the Soviet Army, am capable of only producing nonsense, then I have nothing to do here! I am asking to rid me from the functions of the Chief of General Headquarters and to send to the front... There I, apparently, will be more useful...*

Stalin did not expect such a sharp rebuff.

Mehliş, with a shrill voice loudly pronounced:

-How can you speak in such a tone with comrade Stalin?

The rage quickly disappeared, and Stalin said with a calm voice:

-Don't get into a passion...comrade Zjukov... We here will give your proposal a consideration and call you.

Zjukov became even more pale, and stepped out into the reception room. The offence hurt his heart.

In a couple minutes Beria literally ran into the reception room. Gloating looked at Zjukov, and hardly nod to Poskrebyshev (Stalin's Secretary), stepped into Stalin's office. His appearance did not promise any good.

Zjukov clearly understood, that his actions in the position of Chief of General Headquarters of the Soviet Army gained him many enemies - powerful, unprincipled, cowardly, and because of that even more ruthless. During those bitter minutes of waiting he clearly realized, that the best people, patriots, who love their motherland, are either killed, or are suffering in prisons. And those, like Beria, skilled in intrigues, extortion, and cruelty are in power, and dictate their conditions. He suddenly understood with horror, how hard will suffer the people in such a ongoing terrible war. His soul reacted with pain to that thought. He voicelessly moaned. Poskrebyshev looked at Zjukov with regret, apparently thinking that his career is over. That look, no matter how strange, returned to Zjukov calmness.

Poskrebyshev's telephone rang. He picked it up immediately:

- I am listening, comrade Stalin!

A couple seconds later, Poskrebyshev, showing the door of Stalin's office, said to Zjukov:

-Get in...

Zjukov stepped into the office with confidence. Stalin, dryly, turning his eyes to the side, said:

-We considered here your request, and decided to relief you from the functions of Chief of Headquarters.

- Where do you command me to go?

- Where would you like to go?

- I can do any job - command a division, an army, a front,- quick-tempered reacted Zjukov.

- Don't get into a passion,- once again Stalin tried to calm Zjukov. - You proposed the counterblow near El'nya. So take charge in that business. We will assign you the Commander of the Reserve Front. But keep in mind, that you still remain Vice-Minister of Defense and a member of the General Headquarters.

Received 21 July 1941

Personal and secretive message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

I was very glad to receive Your message and become aware from many sources about the valorous struggle and numerous strong counterattacks, with the help of which the Russian armed forces defend their Motherland. I fully understand the military advantages, which You gained by forcing the enemy to unfold their forces and engage into military action at the advanced ahead Western borders, which partially weakened the force of the initial blow.

Everything reasonable and effective that we can do to help You will be done. I am asking You, however, to take into account the limitations imposing on us by our resources and our geographic situation. From the first day of the German aggression on Russia we had considered the possibility of an attack on the occupied France or the Netherlands. The military commanders do not see a possibility to do anything on such a scale, which would bring You even a smallest profit. In France only the Germans possess about forty divisions, and the entire coast during more than a year had been fortified with purely German diligence and bristled up with guns, barbed wire, fortified fire arms stations and coastal mines. The only area, where we could have just a temporary domination in the air and provide a protection with aircraft fighters - is the area between Dunkirk and Bulony. Here exists an integrated chain of fortifications, and tens of heavy guns dominate over the approaches from the sea, many of them can shoot across the strait. The night time lasts less than five hours, and even during that time the entire territory is lighted by searchlights. To undertake a landing of large forces would mean a bloodshed defeat, and small attacks would lead only to failures, and would bring more harm than use to both of us. Everything would end up in such a fashion that they would have no need to transfer even one formation from Your fronts.

You need to keep in mind, that for more than a year we lead the struggle alone, and while our resources are growing and from now on will grow fast, our forces are stressed to the limit in the parent state as well as in the Middle East, on the land and in the air, and also in connection with the struggle for the Atlantic (region), from the result of which our life depends, and in connection with the navigation of all our convoys which are being hunted by submarines and "Fokke-Vulf" air crafts, our navy forces are stressed to the outmost limit.

However, speaking of some help, which we would be able to provide for You fast, we should be looking to the North. During the last three weeks our Navy Headquarters had been preparing an operation, which the aircraft, based on aircraft carriers, are supposed to conduct against the German ships in the Northern Norway and Finland, hoping in such a way to prevent the enemy from being able to transport troops by sea for attacking Your flank in the Arctic. We asked Your General Headquarters to withhold Russian ships from navigation in a dedicated area between 28 July and 2 August, when we hope to inflict a blow. Secondly, we are currently directing a certain number of cruisers and destroyers to Shpitsbergen, from where they would have the possibility to attack the enemy's ships together with Your navy forces. Third, we are sending submarines for interception of German transports along the Arctic coast realizing that during the constant daylight such

operations are especially dangerous. Fourth, we are sending a mine defender with different loads to Arhangel'sk. That is the most what we can currently accomplish. I would like to be able to do more. I am asking You to keep this in strictest secret up to the moment when we will inform You that publicity will not cause any harm.

A Norwegian light division does not exist. And it would be impossible at constant daylight, without securing the defense by aircraft fighters, to land troops, whether British or Russian, on the territory occupied by the German. We experienced the bitterness of defeats in Namsos last year and on Crete this year trying to conduct similar operations. We are studying as the next step the possibility to base in Murmansk a few squadrons of British aircraft fighters. For that purpose first it would be needed a number of anti-aircraft guns, in addition to land personnel and equipment, and then would come the aircraft, some of which could be airlifted from aircraft carriers, and the others could be delivered in boxes. After they would establish (in place), our squadron from Shpitsbergen could be, possibly, come to Murmansk. We are sure that as soon as it will become known about the presence of our Navy in the North, the Germans will immediately use their unchanging method of confronting our armed forces with large formations of dive-bombers. And because of that it is necessary to act gradually. All of that, however, would require a few weeks.

I ask You to propose, without hesitation, anything else, which You may come across. We, in our turn, will be carefully seeking other methods to inflict a blow to our common enemy.

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VII. Our fallen defenders...

A few days after our arriving in Chernevtsy, my uncle was mobilized to the Soviet Army. Next morning we came to the location, where he was supposed to be stationed to say to him good-bye. Nobody was there: the troops left at night...

Next night we (my grandfather, my aunt, my cousin and myself) left Chernevtsy.

We walked in the dark along a country road, trying to hold on as far from the road as we could. On the other hand, when walking through small villages, we tried to stay away from houses. At a slightest noise, we hid in the field, or in the near-road ditch.

It was a reason for that fear. A large portion of the Ukrainian population was anti-Soviet and also anti-Semitic. They assumed that under the Nazis they would gain self-rule and land. That was the main reason for their collaboration with the Nazis during WWII. *(Here, show clips from the documentary "Blood on the snow")*

However, soon many of those collaborators had been disappointed...

... We slowly moved in the complete darkness, over a poorly paved road. We were tired, and moving was getting harder and harder. In the next village, my grandfather decided to ask for hospitality to stay overnight. He approached a house, in which through the blinds in the window could be seen light, and gently knocked in the door. We waited on the road. After a short conversation with the owner of the house, grandpa returned to us and told us, that the owner agreed to let us stay overnight on the condition, that we will leave before sunrise.

... We slept on the clay floor on what was on us. We left before the sunrise...

We continued our journey, and by noon started to approach to a village called Borovka. From a distance, we noticed a violent fire and smoke: when we came closer, we saw a Nazi military truck was on fire near the road, and the wind was carrying away a wide band of heavy black smoke. The fire started to spread over the wheat field...

We tried to avoid the burning truck, and made a loop, approaching the outskirts of the village. On the very outskirts of the village the landscape becomes somewhat hilly, and the hills, covered with bushes and trees, come to the very road.

They (the hills) form somewhat remaining a horseshoe. When we came close to that place, a terrifying picture suddenly appeared before us: near the road and up the hills we noticed recently made shallow trenches. Here and there were corpses of soviet soldiers and officers... It looked like not long ago there was a fight: the road was covered with craters from grenades; corpses were laying here and there, often in strange positions, where death caught the fighters, defending this little piece of their mother land, defending, probably, us... They could not do it, they were overpowered... But they courageously fought to the last drop of their blood... Blood did not yet dry out on their uniforms and bodies...

... Later we found out, that this small unit (8 - 10 men) of our defenders, armed only with rifles and grenades, fought against a large well-armed Nazi landed force...

5

Received 26 July 1941

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

I am very glad to advise You, that the Military Cabinet, in spite of the fact that this would seriously reduce our resources of aircraft fighters, unanimously decided to send within the shortest period possible to Russia two hundred fighters "Tomagawk". 140 of those aircraft will be sent from to Arhangel'sk from here, and 60 - from the number which we ordered in the United States. Details associated with the supply of spare parts and with

the American personnel, required for the assembly of the airplanes, still have to be coordinated with the United States Government.

Between two to three pairs of boots soon will be ready here for shipping. We also take measures to the delivery during this year of large quantities of rubber, tin, wool and wool cloth, jute, lead and shellac. All other Your requests for raw materials are being seriously considered. In the cases when we do not possess them in stock, or in cases when our stocks are limited, we consider the problem with the USA. Details, of course, will be transferred (to You) through conventional official channels.

We are observing with admiration and emotion all the wonderful struggle of Your armies. All the information in our possession show heavy losses and anxiety of the enemy. Our air raids on Germany will continue with increasing power.

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VIII. Return to Chernevtsy

... We found an empty house in Borovka, and stayed there overnight. We waked up early next morning because of loud noise of motion and a lot of people. Those had been Nazi troops: motorcycles with carriages, large heavy trucks, and bare to the belt soldiers, dousing each other with water.

My grandfather, who fought during WWI in the tsar's army, and who knew German Language, began to speak to a German officer, who seemed not to be wicked. The officer, really, did not express any aggressiveness, and said that the Nazi troops are moving very quickly, and there is no chance for us to catch up with the Soviet troops. Because of that (he said) it is better for us to return to our place... Shortly after that, we left Borovka, heading back to Chernevtsy...

On the way back, we tried to stay away from the main road (flooded first with German troops), using field paths... After a couple miles, the German troops were followed by Romanian troops.

... We kept moving along the field path, trying not to attract attention of the enemy troops on the road.

Suddenly, we noticed that a Romanian soldier separated from his troops, and moved toward us, shouting and gesticulating. We continued to slowly move ahead, pretending

that we do not see or hear the soldier. Finally, he caught up with us and stopped us. The soldier was fully armed. He looked excited and wicked. He quickly examined us children and my grandfather, and did not find any items, which he would like to take.

My aunt had ear-rings. The soldier mandated her to take off the earrings and give them to him. My aunt was extremely scared, and started to remove one earring from her ear. Her fingers were trembling, and she could not take off the earrings as quickly as the soldier would like it. Finally, she took off one earring and gave it to the soldier. The soldier approached her, grabbed the other earring, and forcefully tore it off from her ear. My aunt cried of pain: her lob of the left ear was broken, and blood started to drop down from it...

The soldier ordered my aunt to take off and give to him her wedding ring. Her fingers were swollen from carrying the luggage. And the situation became worse after the soldier performed the "surgical operation" with the earring. The soldier became mad. His face was cherry-red. It looked like, if he will not get the ring next second, he will kill all of us. He grabbed his long knife, and wanted to cut off my aunt's finger together with the ring. But my grandfather courageously and firmly grabbed the soldier's hand with the knife, and told the soldier something in Romanian language. The soldier put his knife back, and my grandfather helped my aunt to take off her ring... The "happy" bandit took the ring, and run to catch up with the rest of the "liberators"... Lessons in barbarism continued... We returned to Chernevtsy...

Zjukov's first big success – the El'nya operation

...Somewhere else, now Commander of the Reserve Front General Zjukov arrived in Gjatsk, and late in the evening appeared in the Headquarters of the 24th Army in order to get familiar with the situation in the field. Here, as a result of the attack of their tank group, the Germans on July 19, 1941 captured El'nya City, and established in its region bridgehead, deeply penetrated into the defense of the Soviet troops. The Germans desperately tried to keep that bridgehead as an advantageous initial position for a blow on Moscow.

After getting familiar with the situation in the field, and corresponding analysis, Zjukov came to a conclusion, that in order to annihilate the enemy, who defended the El'nya projection by infantry divisions, it is necessary to conduct a blow from the South and North underneath its base, and then to surround, and, after that to annihilate the enemy.

During July-August the divisions of the 24th Army of General Rakutin few times tried to cut-off the projection and to restore the situation in the El'nya region. However, lack of forces and absence of experience in offensive operations did not allow completing that task. In addition, the enemy managed to prepare to the defense much better, than it previously had been assumed.

While General Zjukov had been Commander of a relatively small Reserve Front, he distinctively saw the entire panorama of the unfolding events on the Soviet-German front. He constantly demanded of his troops not to lower their activity, in order at list somehow to chain the German armies, to pool them on himself.

On August 19, 1941 Zjukov sent to Stalin a telegram:

"The enemy, being convinced in concentration of large forces of our troops on the way to Moscow, and having on the enemy's flanks our Central Front and the Velikoluksk Group, temporarily refused to conduct a blow on Moscow. The enemy turned to active defense against the Western and Reserve Fronts, and throw all his impact, mobile and tank divisions against the Central, South-Western and South Fronts. The possible intention of the enemy: to rout the Central Front, and after moving into the region Chernigov-Konotop-Priluki, with a blow from the rear, to annihilate the armies of South-Western Front. After that - the main blow on Moscow, in detour of Bryanskiy forests, and a blow to Donbass..."

To ruin that dangerous intention of the German Command, Zjukov proposed to quickly organize a group of troops in the region Chernigov-Konotop, and using the forces of that group, to conduct a blow into the flank of the enemy as soon as it starts to practically carry out its plans.

Same day Zjukov received an answering telegram, signed by Stalin and Shaposhnikov (Chief, General Headquarters):

"Your considerations concerning the possible advancement of the Germans toward Chernigov, Konotop, Priluki we consider as appropriate. In the prognosis of such an undesirable development, and for its prevention the Bryanskiy Front had been organized under command of Eremenko. Other measures are also being taken, concerning which we will inform you separately. Hope, to interrupt the advancement of the Germans".

Soon after that, General Zjukov received a directive from the General Headquarters. It stated in particular:

"Troops of the Reserve Front, continuing to enforce with its main forces the defense band on the boundary Selizjarovo-Olenino-Dnieper River-Kirov, on August 30, 1941 must turn into offensive with its left flank 24th and 43rd armies with the tasks: to demolish the El'nya group of the enemy, to liberate El'nya, and continuing to conduct blows in the directions of Pochinok and Roslavl', on September 8, 1941 to advance to the front Dolgie Nivy-Hislavichi-Petrovichi".

Those directives had been corresponding with Zjukov's intentions.

The El'nya operation had been Zjukov's first independent operation, first examination of his personal Commander's abilities in the war with Germany. Because of that it is easy to understand, how much attention and care Zjukov paid in its preparation.

After a short artillery preparation, the troops of the 24th Army turned into offensive. Repulsing strong counterattacks of the enemy, the troops of the 24th Army on September

4, 1941 embraced the flanks of the main forces of the 20th army corps of the Germans, which had been defending the El'nya projection. Under the threat of surrender, the enemy started to back-off. The 19th rifle division on September 5, burst into El'nya, and in cooperation with the troops of the 309th and 120th divisions liberated the city in the morning September 6.

By the end of September 8, the El'nya projection had been cut-off. The enemy lost an advantageous bridgehead for blows into the flanks of the soviet troops. Five German divisions suffered heavy losses: only in manpower they lost up to 45,000 men.

The El'nya operation became the first serious success in that heavy tragic 1941 year, its bright spot. Zjukov proved to everybody, that the enemy could be firmly bitten.

6

Received 28 July 1941

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

Regarding Your request about supplying rubber, we will send the shipments from here or from the USA the best and the fastest way. Please advise what kind of rubber should it be and what way would You like to receive it. The preliminary instructions have already been given.

Mr. Harry Hopkins was with me last few days. Last week he asked the President to allow him to visit Moscow. I have to tell You that this man is flamingly dedicated to democracy and has a great desire to defeat Hitler. Recently, when I asked him about a quarter of a million of rifles they had been delivered immediately. He is the closest personal representative of the President. The President already provided him with complete instructions, and he is leaving my house today to go to You. You will be advised about his arrival through appropriate channels. You may relate to him with complete trust: he is Your friend and our friend. He will help You in preparation of the future victory and in establishing supplies for Russia for a long period. You could freely discuss with him politics, strategy and about Japan.

The magnificent resistance of the Russian armies in the defense of the motherland is uniting all of us. The coming winter Germany will have to experience a horrible bombarding. Nobody yet had experienced what they are going to.

The navy operations, mentioned in my previous telegram to You are now underway. I am sincerely thankful for Your understanding with which You, being completely busy with Your great struggle, relate to our difficulties, which do not allow us to do more. We will do everything in our power.

IX. The Massacre

A few days after our return to Chernevtsy, three soviet prisoners of war escaped from the place, where the Nazis had kept them. The Nazis declared, that if the local population will not extradite the escapees until noon next day, hostages will be taken...

(This "declaration" was as absurd as Nazism itself: the escapees would be "educated" enough not to stay in a little town, but move ahead, and not to report to the local population about their hiding place, should they choose to stay for a while in Chernevtsy...). Tragically, my grandfather went out to get cigarettes, and was caught as one of the 12 hostages...

Next day, the hostages had been lead out, put at the very edge of the dam, partitioning the river, with their backs to the waterfall, and gunned down...

... When the hostages were lead to the dam, their hands were tied up and over their had. The face of my grandfather became dark during those last 24 hours, but it did not bear fear. It was thoughtful, concerned: my grand father did not fear them (the nazis) - he was a courageous person, a genuine man...

... It was a bright summer day, but this little town seemed dead - no adults in the streets. Only we - a few boys, saw the bloody massacre... When we first noticed the Nazi submachine gunners, convoying the hostages, we did not became scared right away, probably because we did not understand what is going to happen. A few seconds later, one of the older boys shouted "Escape!!!", and started to run. We dashed, following him, and keeping an eye on the hostages and the submachine gunners from behind the houses, until we arrived the last house, closest to the dam. From here we could see everything... (...I still have severe pain and suffering in my heart because I could not save my grandfather and did not retaliate for his murdering...)

... Next day the people of the town gathered together to drag out the corpses of the massacred, and to bury them... The river on the side of the waterfall is shallow, and covered with rocks and stones. The scene was terrifying: the corpses had been drag out with the help of hooks, ropes and nets. They had been disfigured at the blow of the concrete base of the dam. Their bodies swelled... Fish had eaten their eyes... The sight was terrifying... But even more terrifying was the shout of women, reaching the sky... This will never disappear from my mind...

Leningrad in Danger!!!

Somewhere else, the Nazis concentrated nine divisions of their 4th Tank Group, and restarted the offensive on Leningrad. On August 25, they captured Lyuban', on August 28 - Tosno. That generated a great deal of concern of the Soviet Supreme Command since the Nazi troops had been in less than 50 kilometers from Leningrad.

Stalin immediately sent to Leningrad a group of representatives of The State Committee of Defense (SCD) including V.M. Molotov, G.M. Malenkov, A.I. Kosygin and others "for consideration... and decision making on all the problems of defense of Leningrad, and evacuation of the industry and the population of Leningrad".

The Soviet Supreme Command expressed in the sharpest language its dissatisfaction with the actions of the Command of the Leningrad Front (established on August 23, 1941).

To: Popov - Commander of the Leningrad Front

August 28, 1941

Your today's notions represent blackmail. The Commanders of your armies are intimidating you, and you, in turn, apparently decided to intimidate the Supreme Command... Sure, if you are going to do nothing, and not to demand actions of your subordinates, and if you are going to play a role of only a walker-on, who is transferring the complaints of the armies, then, in a few days, you would have to give up Leningrad.

However, the Supreme Command exists not for the reason to give-in to blackmailing demands and proposals. The Supreme Command allows you to withdraw troops from the line of Vyborg. However, the Supreme Command is ordering you, not to withdraw - by any conditions! - troops from the prepared line of Mannerheim.

The Supreme Command requires, that you stop to be a walker-on and a specialist in retreat, and step-in into the role of a Commander, who is elevating the moral and the spirit of his troops.

**Stalin
Shaposhnikov**

*Next day Stalin telegraphed to V.M. Molotov and G.M. Malenkov
August 29, 1941. Absolutely Secretly. Leningrad*

For MOLOTOV and MALENKOV

Just a minute ago it became known that Tosno had been captured by the enemy. If this will continue, I am afraid that Leningrad will be given up idiotically stupid. And all Leningrad's divisions are at risk of being taken in captivity. What are Popov and

Voroshilov doing. They even do not advise about actions, which they think to undertake against such a danger. They are involved in finding new positions for retreat, this is where they see their task. Where did they get such a abyss of passivity and purely rural submission to the fait? What kind of people are they - I don't understand. Leningrad possesses now many tanks, a lot of air planes, reactive projectiles ("Katyusha's"). Why aren't all these important technical means activated on the area Lyuban'- Tosno? What can do against the German tanks some sort of infantry regiment without those technical means? Why all that rich technical armor in Leningrad is not being used in that decisive Area?.. What kind of man is Popov? What is actually doing Voroshilov and what kind of help is he providing for Leningrad? I am writing about that, because I am very worry with the unclear for me inaction of the Leningrad's Command. I think, that on August 29 you must come to Moscow. Please, do not delay.

Stalin

7

Received 1 August 1941

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

After my personal interference there had been made all the required preparations for the shipment from here of ten thousand tons of rubber to one of Your Northern ports. Because of the high urgency of Your requests we take the risk of reduction by that amount of our stocks in the metropolis, which are far from great and replenishment of which would require some time.

The British ships, which will transport that rubber and some other materials, will complete the loading during a week, or a maximum of ten days, and leave for one of Your Northern ports as soon as the Admiralty will be able to form a convoy.

That new amount of 10,000 tons is in addition to the 10,000 tons of rubber already given to You from Malays. From that last amount 2651 tons had already been shipped 20 July on the ship "Volga" from Port-Suattenem to Vladivostok. The ship "Arctica" also left Malays carrying 2500 tons. The ship "Maksim Gor'kiy", which left Shanghai on 25 July, and the ship "Krasniy partisan", the departure of which from Hong-Kong is scheduled on 1 August, are supposed to come to Malays at the beginning of August and pick up additional load of rubber, which together with already shipped on the first two ships will amount to 10,000 tons in addition to 10,000 tons mentioned in the first paragraph.

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X. Return to Mogilyov

The sister of my grandmother - the closest to me then alive relative in Chernevtsy, decided that she and I need to return to Mogilyov-Podol'sk. In Chernevtsy there was nobody to feed us, to give us a shelter. My aunt and my cousin had already been sheltered by my aunt's relatives. And that was all they could afford. Tough times already came. The toughest times have still been to come...

... We walked to Mogilyov...

... We found the city after a flood, looking even more horrifying than after the bombing alone. The streets and houses, which had been flooded, were covered with drying and stinking mud. Some times, one could see unburied corps, lying in the mud... The smell was horrible... Once a beautiful blossoming town, was converted into a junk grave yard...

We found an empty apartment not far away from our former house. We stayed overnight there. Next morning, we decided to take a look what happened to our house, and to see if we can recover some of our goods (cloth, etc.) for use, or to exchange for food. The door of our house was open, and when we approached it, we heard voices inside the house.

When we entered into the house, we saw in the dining room a German officer and an Ukrainian gendarme. They had been taking our Passover silverware and goldware, wrapping it up in towels and table clothes, and packing into boxes.

They were so pre-occupied with their business, that they first did not notice us. And then, the gendarme, who noticed us first, shouted in Ukrainian language "Out! Out!". We left immediately, and my grandaunt said: "Those Passover items had been in our family for generations..."

We crossed the street, and distanced ourselves from the gate to our house so that we would not be easily noticeable. Then we waited until the German officer and the gendarme loaded their car with our Passover relics and left. Then we returned to our house to pick-up some cloth and other items of immediate necessity: the nights were getting colder, and fall was already there. We needed food, and some of those items we exchanged for food in the next few days...

We stayed in our new shelter for a few more days. Of course, there was no running water, or electricity, or heat. We were getting water from a well. It was a wood burning stove in the kitchen, which we used to heat water, to bake potatoes, and to warm up a little bit the place...

...My grandaunt was desperately trying to find somebody, who she could entrust me, and who would be willing and able to take care of me. She was loosing her physical strength,

and, probably, felt that her chances to survive much longer are limited... Food was becoming more rare, and all the horrors of the last few months undermined her strength...

Finally, her efforts had been rewarded: my father's sister returned to Mogilyov with her 8 months baby-boy and two daughters (7 and 12 years old), and my grandmother on my father's side. They also tried to catch up with the retreating soviet troops, but unsuccessfully...

... After a short private conversation with my grandaunt Frima, my aunt declared, that I will stay with them. Then, shortly after, my grandaunt left. We did not see her for a few days. When we went to see her in her shelter, we found her dead...

Stalin turns to Zjukov to save Leningrad

Somewhere else, the German armies continued relentlessly strive for Leningrad. On August 30, 1941 they arrived at Neva River, and on September 8 captured Shlissel'burg, arriving at the Ladoga Lake and blocking Leningrad from the land.

The new Commander of the Leningrad Front Marshal Voroshilov gave an order to prepare the most important objects of Leningrad to annihilation.

The Commission under Molotov's management, which came to Leningrad to help to organize the city's defense, had also a task to define whether Voroshilov could be left as the Commander of the defense of Leningrad. The conclusion of the Commission was - NO. That conclusion had been reported to Stalin.

The situation on the South-Western Front rapidly deteriorated. The German divisions of the 2nd Field Army and 2nd Tank Group under General Guderian's command turned to South, and on August 18, 1941 burst open to Starodub City, and next day to Gomel' City. They continued their fast offensive, generating a real threat to the right flank and rear of the South-Western Front. The events had been unfolding exactly as General Zjukov predicted. Counteractions of the Bryanskiy Front, on which Stalin placed so much hope, had not brought any success.

On September 12, 1941 the Germans' 1st Tank Group under General Kleist's command turned into offensive from the Kremenchug City region into the Northern direction. Three days later, the loop had been closed near a small Ukrainian village Lohvitsy, where the tank divisions of General Guderian had arrived. Inside that huge loop had been surrounded the management of the South-Western Front and four soviet armies - over 450,000 people.

... And before those events, on September 9, 1941, Stalin called Zjukov to the Supreme Command Headquarters...

...Zjukov was running already late. Into the Kremlin he drove in complete darkness. Suddenly a sharp ray of a flashlight crossed Zjukov's eyes. He stopped the car. In the man, who approached the car, Zjukov recognized General Vlasik - Head of Stalin's personal Security group.

- *The Supreme Commander ordered to meet you and to accompany to his apartment, - said Vlasik.*

Zjukov left the car, and followed the general. He did not ask the general any questions, knowing that he would not get any answers.

Walking to the 2nd floor, where Stalin's apartment had been located, Zjukov had not yet decided what and how he is going to speak in self-defense about being late.

Around the table had been sited Stalin, Molotov and other members of the Politburo.

- *It worked out good for you near El'nya, - cordially greeted him Stalin, like there was no that critically dangerous conversation last July. - You had been right then. Our situation near Kiev is bad. Marshal Budenniy does not manage his duties well. Who, do you think, could replace him?*

Zjukov looked at Stalin with perplexity and thought: "The Supreme is, again, looking for scape goats, but not how to get out from a difficult situation. Aren't they planing make me the Commander of the South-Western Front?"

Stalin had interrupted Zjukov's reflections:

- *A very bad situation appeared near Leningrad, I would say, a hopeless. With the loss of Leningrad under a treat of a blow from the North would appear Moscow ...*
- *Since it is so complex there, I am ready to go as a Commander of the Leningrad Front, - said Zjukov understanding Stalin's intentions.*
- *When can you go? - asked Stalin, considering the problem solved.*
- *Would you let me go immediately?*
- *Do not rush. How do you evaluate the upcoming plans and possibilities of the enemy?*
- *I think, - Zjukov replied with confidence, - that the most dangerous area for us is the South-Western Front. The troops of the German Group of armies "Center", which burst open into the Chernigov City area, can smash the 21st Army and appear in the rear of General Kirponos' troops. I am sure, that General Kleist would be cooperating with General Guderian's troops from the Kremenchug City area. I am asking again to pull back the Kiev group of troops to the eastern bank of the Dnieper River, give up Kiev, and enforce the flanks of the Front.*

This time Stalin calmly answered:

- *OK, we will give a detailed consideration to this problem, and will talk to the Military Council of the Front...*

Thanks to Zjukov's courage and firmness in defending his position in front of the political management of the Country Zjukov achieved his goal. In the future the Supreme Commander Stalin started to listen to Zjukov's grounded conclusions and propositions with great attention during development of plans of strategic operations and military campaigns.

After a short conversation Zjukov left Stalin's apartment in the Kremlin with a short note, addressed to Voroshilov, Commander of the Leningrad Front. In that note Stalin wrote: "Transfer the Commandment of the Front to Zjukov, and immediately return to Moscow".

At that critical moment of the war Stalin was not sure in the possibility to defend Leningrad. According to Zjukov, Stalin evaluated the situation near Leningrad as "catastrophic", and even used the word "hopeless". He said "apparently, it will pass few more days, and Leningrad would have to be count as lost".

#8

Received 15 August 1941

W. Churchill and F. Roosevelt to I. V. Stalin

We took advantage on the opportunity, which occurred at the consideration of Mr. Harry Hopkins' report after his return from Moscow, to consider how our two countries can in the best way help Your country in that magnificent rebuff which You render to the Nazis' aggression. We are currently working together to provide for You the maximum amounts of materials which You need the most. Many ships with loads already left our coasts, the others will leave in the nearest future.

We have to pay our attention to consideration of politics, calculated for a more prolonged time, because there is a long and difficult way to go before it will be achieved the complete victory, without which our efforts and sacrifices would vain.

The war goes on many fronts, and, before it ends, it can still appear new military fronts. Our resources, while gigantic, are still limited, and it should be considered where and when those resources can be used most efficiently for the maximum facilitation our united efforts. This equally relates to military equipment as to raw materials.

The needs and requirements of Your and our military forces can be defined in light of complete knowledge about many facts, which should be taken into account in our decisions. For all of us to be able to take quick decisions regarding our common resources, we propose to prepare a meeting in Moscow, to which we would send high-ranking representatives, who could consider those problems directly with You. Should the proposal about such a meeting get Your approval, we would like to inform You, that before the decisions, accepted at such a meeting, we will continue as soon as possible to send to You supplies and materials.

We completely realize how important for the defeat of Hitlerism is the courageous and firm resistance of the Soviet Union, and because of that we consider that in the business of planning the program of distribution of our common resources we must act quickly and without delays at any conditions.

Franklin D. ROOSVELT
Winston S. CHURCHILL

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XI. A little funeral...

... My aunt found some cloth, in which she wrapped up my grandaunt's body. We, the children, helped her to do this. Then we found a two-wheel bogie, used to carry boards and other lumber. We placed my grandaunt's body on that bogie, tighten it to the bogie with ropes, and started to move toward the Jewish cemetery. It was a long way to go through the entire city, which itself looked dead: nobody in the streets, nobody to help us...

The procession must be looking very strange to an observer: a woman in her early thirties and a seven years old boy pushing a two-wheel bogie with a dead body on it, not even in a coffin, and two girls - 7 and 12 years old, following behind that bogie...

The last portion of the distance was the hardest. The cemetery is located on top of the hill, overlooking the city and the Dniester River, with that portion of the road being steep enough.

... We entered the cemetery, and soon found a place to bury my grandaunt Frima. My aunt started to dig a grave with a spade, which we brought with us. In spite of the cool weather of that day, my aunt's face was wet from sweat, or, may be from tears... We tried to help her to dig the grave, but our help was insignificant... Finally, the work was done. The grave came out shallow and narrow... But we all had been exhausted, and the grave was large enough to accept my grandaunt's body...

... We carefully lowered the body into the grave. My aunt said a prayer, and we started to cover the body with soil...

When we returned to my grandmother's flat, the baby-boy was crying: he still was breast-fed, and the feeding time was long past due...

Zjukov's flight over the front line and arrival in Leningrad

Somewhere else in the world, Stalin forwarding General Zjukov to Leningrad, had not been sure in the success of his mission. The following are a few items from Stalin's order of September 13, 1941:

- 1. In the case of emergency retreat from Leningrad, all the ships of the military fleet, and also commercial, technical and all others are to be annihilated.*
- 2. That annihilation is to be conducted with the purpose:*
 - (a) to exclude their usage by the enemy;*
 - (b) to exclude the possibility of the enemy's navigation in the area Kronshtadt - Leningrad and the usage by the enemy fairways, roadsteads, harbors and channels.*
- 3. The annihilation to be conducted with maximum possible demolitions, i.e. the ships are to be blown up and sunk.*
- 4. The annihilation is to be conducted following a strictly consistent plan from the moment of the signal from the Supreme Command...*

Between the directives, which Stalin gave to Zjukov late in the evening on September 9, 1941, had been such as the following:

- Keep in mind...that you would have to fly over the front line, or over the Ladoga Lake, which is being controlled by the German aviation... The order of the Supreme Command concerning your assignment would be carried out after your arrival in Leningrad.*

Zjukov understood that behind those words there is a fear for the success of the upcoming crossing of the front line.

...Early in the morning on September 10, 1941, the 160th fighter regiment, based in the airdrome Saroja, twenty kilometers northern of Tihvin, waited for weather improvement to fly on a combat mission. But, in spite of the bad weather, the crews of two units had been waiting in their aircraft. The green rockets from the Command point of the regiment - the signal to start the engines - first was interpreted by the fighter-pilots as a mistake. But over the radio followed an additional command to immediately fly to the neighboring airdrome Kayvaks. So they did. In a few minutes on the landing course appeared a military-transport "Douglas", landed, and confidently drove to the group of fighters.

A medium-tall dense man in a leather coat stepped out from the "Douglas". The attention of the pilots had been driven to the bearing of that man. His face also looked to them familiar. But they could not recall where and at what conditions they saw that man before. Later they found out that the man was General Zjukov.

The man had been met on the airdrome by colonel Holzakov, Commander of the 3rd Reserve Air group of the Supreme Command.

From the man in the leather coat, the colonel ran to the pilots.

-Now, you will lead that "Douglas" to the Commandant's Airdrome in Leningrad,- nod the colonel in the direction of the "Douglas". - Without that machine do not come home!

And after a short pause, intensely taking a look at the pilots, pointed out:

- To carry out at any cost.

Following the "Douglas", nine fighters started their engines and got ready to the take-off. The clouds are hanging just over the trees. A light autumn rain is knocking into the front of the air craft, worsening the already bad visibility. The "Douglas" is flying over the peaks of the trees heading to the Ladoga Lake.

With the advance to the North-West, the weather is worsening. A dense fog is arising from the swampy landscape. The Commander of the "Douglas" is choosing "windows", i.e., wherever there is less rain and the visibility is slightly better.

The flight goes on the limits of the possibilities of the airplanes. On the North-West of the horizon appears a pale-pink little strip. It stops raining. The clouds, under which the airplanes are flying, is slowly elevating. At the shore line of Ladoga Lake the cloudiness sharply disappeared, around are clear skies and a bright sun.

Suddenly, ahead appear two black dots, which quickly convert into two pairs of "Messerschmidts". The four "Messerschmidts" immediately engage into a combat with the Soviet fighters. The "Douglas" sharply lowered his elevation, and continued to fly on its course. Three soviet fighters LAGG-3 are covering him, the rest of the fighters are engaged into the combat with the "Messerschmidts".

Soon, the Germans discover the "Douglas", and try to attack him.

Extraordinary actions and capabilities had been required from the fighter pilots in the situation, which appeared. And they fought selflessly. Maneuvering confidently in the immediate vicinity of the "Douglas", beating off the relentless attacks of the "Messerschmidts", in critical moments they throw themselves under the deadly bursts, directed into the "Douglas". All the time, the soviet fighters not only intimidated the enemy with the fire of their guns, but also with direct impact - ram blow. The Germans stopped their attacks only in the vicinity of Leningrad.

Covering up the "Douglas" at the landing, and then covering up his passengers, who left the "Douglas" and took seats in cars, the fighters successfully completed their combat mission, and soon after that already accompanied a group of transport airplanes in the direction to Tihvin.

At the arrival of the Smol'niy Palace, General Zjukov stepped into the office of Marshal Voroshilov. Here, around a table, had been sitting about 10 men - it was going on a meeting of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front. The Council was considering the annihilation of the most important objects of Leningrad and the ships of the Baltic Fleet.

The character of that consideration enraged Zjukov. Here, they are thinking not about the combat, but about capitulation. Zjukov passed Stalin's note to Voroshilov, who quietly read the note, and set down. Then Zjukov said, that he had been assigned as the Commander of the Leningrad Front, and the Chief of the Headquarters of that front will be General M.S. Hozin. The order about that assignment had been underwritten on September 11, after Zjukov reported to Stalin about his arrival in Leningrad. It was short:

- 1. Excuse Marshal Voroshilov from duties of the Commander of the Leningrad Front.*
- 2. Assign Army General Zjukov as Commander of the Leningrad Front, and excuse him from the duties of the Commander of the Reserve Front.*
- 3. Comrade Voroshilov to transfer the affairs of the front, and comrade Zjukov to take over within 24 hours from the hour of comrade Zjukov's arrival in Leningrad. Assign General Hozin as Chief of Headquarters of the Leningrad Front.*

*Stalin
Shaposhnikov*

9

Received 30 August 1941

Personal Message from Prime Minister to Mr. Stalin

I tried to find some way to help Your country in its magnificent struggle before accomplishment of efforts, calculated for a longer period, which are the subject of our current negotiations with the United States of America and which are to be the subject of the Moscow meeting. Mr. Mayskiy declared that there is a strong need in aircraft fighters because of Your losses. We accelerate the shipment of 200 "Tomogawk" air plains about which I telegraphed to You in my last message. Our two squadrons of 40 "Hurricanes" are supposed to arrive in Murmansk at about 6 September. I am sure that aircraft fighters introduce the basis of defense of the metropolis. In addition, we are trying to achieve domination in the air in Libya, and also to supply Turkey to attract it to our side. In spite of that, I could send additional 200 "Hurricanes", which would totaling in 440 fighters, if Your pilots could use them effectively. We are talking about air planes "Hurricane", equipped with eight - twelve machine-guns. WQE found that those air plains are pretty deadly weapons in action. We could send to Arhangel'sk 100 of them now and then two groups of 50 in each together with mechanics, instructors, spare parts and equipment. Meanwhile, measures could be

taken to start the acquaintance of Your pilots and mechanics with new models should they get attached to our squadrons in Murmansk. Should You decide that this would be helpful, corresponding instructions would be given from here...

The news about the Iranians, canceling the resistance, is pleasurable. With all the importance to protect the oil sources, the purpose of our entry into Iran was the intention to establish one more through way to You, which could not be cut off. With that in mind, we have to reconstruct the railroad from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and provide its uninterrupted work using additional railroad equipment, being delivered from India. The Minister of Foreign Affairs passed to Mr. Mayskiy for delivery to You approximate conditions, on which we would like to conclude an agreement with the Iranian Government in order to deal with a friendly people and not be forced to spend a few divisions for the protection of the railroad. Food is being sent from India, and if the Iranians would collaborate, we will renew payments for oil which we currently owe to the Shah. We ordered our vanguard to move ahead so that our forces will meet Your forces at a point, which will be defined by commanders somewhere between Hamadan and Kazvin. It would be good for the entire world to know that the British and Soviet armed forces really hold out each other's hands. In our opinion it would be better if neither we nor You would enter into Teheran at the current time because we only need a through way. We are establishing a large basic outlet in Basra, and hope to build there a well-equipped warm- water port for acceptance of shipments from America, which by such a way would certainly reach the areas of the Caspian Sea and Volga.

I can not resist expressing the admiration of the British people with the magnificent struggle of the Russian armies and the Russian people against the Nazi criminals. General McFarland had been greatly impressed with what he saw on the front. We have hard days ahead of us, but Hitler is not going to have a pleasurable winter as well with our constantly increasing bombarding from the air. I was pleased with Your warning made to Japan with regard to commodities delivered through Vladivostok. President Roosevelt during the meeting with me seemed to be inclined to take a harder position in case of further aggressive actions on the part of Japan, and I rushed to declare that he can count on our support in case of a war... We do not want war with Japan, and I am sure that it can be avoided by putting those people, divided by discord and who are not really sure in themselves, in front of a perspective of formation of the most powerful coalition.

XII. The 1001 Nights

... We first settled in my grandmother's apartment, which included a large room and a little kitchen. This choice was made because that apartment was much smaller than my aunt's apartment, i.e., it was easier to heat it.

... Most of the belongings of my grandmother had been stolen during her absence by the local Ukrainian population. Even her bed was taken away...

So, we slept on the bare floor, fully dressed, covering up with what was left from personal belongings...

Some times, neighbors would come to our place to stay overnight because the windows in their apartments were broken, and they did not yet manage to repair them: there was no glass or other material to buy to repair their shelters...

... The nights had been filled with fear and horror. It was the first of those nights, which would later become typical. We went to sleep in fear and uncertainty. Fear now became the dominating feeling and factor of our existence...

... Suddenly, thunder-like blows into our heavy thick door shattered the night: the horrifying blows were coming from heavy underforged boots and butts of rifles. The blows were accompanied by loud shouting in Ukrainian language "Open the door!!!".

Four armed monsters - two in German uniform and two Ukrainian gendarmes - burst into the room through the opened door.

They quickly observed the room with our "beds" on the bare floor, and commanded to show them identification documents. After a formal look into the documents, they demanded valuables. The answer was: "We do not have any of them". They shot and killed our neighbor, who did not have his passport with him. They arrested an elderly man - a neighbor, who happened to stay overnight with us, hoping that his relatives would come next day and buy him out. We never saw him again...

The bandits left. Everybody in the room was horrified and trembling... And only extreme fatigue helped the people to overcome for a while the horror, and to fall asleep...

From now on, such nights would become typical... Horror would dominate our existence for months and years to come...

Zjukov – Commander of the Leningrad Front

Elsewhere, General Zjukov, who just arrived in Leningrad as the Commander of the Leningrad Front, found the City blocked from all sides. Bombs and shells had been exploding in streets and residential quarters. The Nazis tried to break up the troops' and the population's moral by constant shelling and bombing of the City. In such a difficult situation, it was necessary not only to crash the depressive mood of the Command and administration of the City, but in short time to organize a strong defense with available forces and means.

Zjukov ordered General I.I.Fedyuninskiy, who came with Zjukov from Moscow, to set off for the 42nd Army, where the situation had been the most stressful, and to take corresponding actions with the purpose of preventing a break of the enemy to Leningrad through Pulkovsk hights.

The rest of the day and the following night Zjukov together with Voroshilov, Jdanov (Member of the Military Council of the Front), General Hozin, Commanders of different groups of the armed forces and the Navy analyzed the situation, and solved problems affiliated with the enforcement of the defense of the City.

Then, Zjukov called the Commander of the Baltic Fleet Vice-Admiral V.F. Tributs, and ordered him to immediately clear of mines the ships, to pull them closer to the South shore of the Finnskiy Gulf. Zjukov also ordered Tributs to establish coordination with the commanders of the armies, and with the fire of the ships' artillery to support the troops. The main efforts to concentrate on Uritsk City and on Pulkovsk Hights.

- Your ships may perish, but only in combat, shooting the enemy to the last shell,- sharply concluded Zjukov the instructions.

Zjukov ordered to use the anti-aircraft artillery to beat off the attacks of the German tanks on the most dangerous directions, and particularly in the region of the Pulkovsk Heights. He immediately organized engineering works. For that purpose, the population of Leningrad and troops had been mobilized. He started to form special rifle brigades from the servicemen of the Navy and students of Higher Education Organizations of Leningrad.

The situation, however, continued to be complex. The enemy strive for Leningrad. On September 13, the 42nd Army retreated to the Pulkovsk Defensive line, the engineering works on which had not been completed. The front line came very close to Leningrad.

Due to the treat of the enemy to burst into the City through Uritsk, on September 16 General Zjukov gave the following order to General Fedyuninsky - Commander of the 42nd Army:

Combat Order # 0054 of the Headquarters of the Leningrad Front
September 16, 1941, 23h, 50min.

1. *The task of the Army on September 17, not to allow the enemy to advance to the Finnskiy Gulf in the direction Uritsk, Petergof and to capture the Pulkovsk Heights.*

I am ordering:

- a) *grinding down the enemy in the regions Staro-Panovo, Kaupilovo-Gorelovo, Konstantinovka, Finnskoe Koyrovo by artillery fire and systematic actions of the aviation, thus preparing the conditions for liquidation of the enemy's group, which burst to Leningrad, and restoration of the previous situation.*
 - b) *21st rifle division to yield to the frontier of elevation 10.5, elevation 16.2, Novo-Koyrovo, elevation 20.3, Kiskino vanguards with the task not to allow burst of the enemy along the Litovsk canal.*
 - c) *During the night to clean up from small groups of the enemy the regions Uritsk, Sosnovaya Polyana, Ivanovka, and to liberate the road Leningrad - Strel'na.*
2. *To the right, the 8th Army is restoring its position on its left flank. To the left, the 55 Army has a task not to allow burst of the enemy in the direction Alexandrovka, Shushary and along the Moscow highway.*
 3. *The Commander of the Baltic Fleet, the Commander of the Air Force and the Chief of the Artillery of the Leningrad Front to develop jointly a plan of coordinated actions of forces and means in correspondence with the task given to the Army, and give the necessary directives.*
 4. *To report about the receiving this order, and about directives conveyed to the troops.*

Commander of the Leningrad Front, Army General Zjukov
Member of the Military Council of the Front, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Zhdanov

The same day, the situation had sharply worsened. The enemy burst to Finnish Gulf western to Leningrad, and cut off the troops of the 8th Army from the major forces of the Front. To the West of Leningrad appeared the Oranienbaum bridge-head. Next day the enemy captured Pavlovsk City and burst into Pushkin City.

The situation seemed hopeless. Then Zjukov used the last critical mean, hoping to return to his troops confidence in their force and capabilities. On September 17 he gave a severe order:

***To Military Councils of the 42nd and 55th Armies
Battle Order # 0064***

From the Headquarters of the Leningrad Front

September 17, 1941

- 1. Taking into account the critically important role of the boundary Ligovo, Kiskino, Verhnee Koyrovo, Pulkovsk Heights, and the region Moscovskaya Slavyanka, Shushary and Kolpino in the defense of the Southern part of Leningrad, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front is ordering to announce to the entire Commanding, Political and Private contingent, who is defending the aforementioned boundary, that for leaving that boundary without a written order of the Military Council of the Front, all Commanders, Political personnel and Privates are subjects to immediate shooting down.*
- 2. The current order must be declared to the Commanding and Political contingent on a receipt, and must be explained in detail to the Private contingent.*
- 3. Execution of this Order to report by 12.00 on September 18, 1941.*

Commander of the Leningrad Front, Hero of the Soviet Union

Army General Zjukov

***Member of the Front Military Council, Secretary of the Central Committee
Of the Communist Party Zhdanov***

***Member of the Front Military Council, Division Commissar Kuznetsov
Chief of the Headquarters of the Leningrad Front General-Lieutenant Hozin***

10

Sent 3 September 1941

Personal Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. Churchill

I am offering my thanks for the promises to sell to the Soviet Union 200 airplanes-fighters in addition to the already promised earlier 200 aircraft fighters. I am sure that the Soviet pilots would be able to master them and to put to use.

I must, however, to say that those airplanes, which, apparently, could be put to use not soon and not immediately, but indifferent time and in separate groups, would not be able to bring serious changes on the Eastern Front. They would not be able to bring serious changes not only because of the great scales of the war, which require continuous delivery of large quantities of airplanes, but mainly because of the fact that during the last three weeks the situation of the Soviet troops significantly worsened in such important areas as Ukraine and Leningrad.

The relative stabilization on the front, which had been achieved about three weeks ago, had been crashed last weeks due to the delivery to the Eastern Front fresh 30 - 34 German infantry divisions and huge quantities of tanks and airplanes, and also because of great activation of 20 divisions from Finland and 26 divisions from Romania. The Germans consider as a bluff the danger in the West, and with impunity are transferring all their forces from the West to the East being sure that there is no and there will be no Second Front in the West. The Germans consider completely possible to beat their enemies one by one: first the Russians, then the English.

As a result we lost more than a half of Ukraine, and in addition the enemy appeared at the gates of Leningrad.

Those conditions lead to the fact, that we lost the Krivoy Rog iron-ore basin and a number of Steel Plants in Ukraine, evacuated one Aluminum Plant on the Dnieper River and the other Aluminum Plant in Tihvin, one Engine and two Aircraft Plants in Ukraine, two Engine and two Aircraft Plants in Leningrad, and those plants can be reactivated in new locations not earlier than in seven - eight months.

All of that lead to the weakening of our defense, and put the Soviet Union in front of a deadly threat.

Here is the pertinent question: how to get out from that more than unfavorable situation?

I think that there is only one way from such a situation: to create during the current year the Second Front on the Balkans or in France, which could pull from the Eastern Front 30 - 40 German divisions, and simultaneously to provide for the Soviet Union 30 thousand tons of aluminum to the beginning of October this year and a *monthly minimal aid* of 400 airplanes and 500 tanks (small and medium).

Without those two kinds of aids the Soviet Union either will be defeated, or will be weakened to the extend that will loose for a long time the ability to actively help his allies on the front of the struggle with Hitlerism.

I understand, that this Message would be troubling for Your Excellency. But what to do? Experience taught me to look into the eyes of the reality no matter how unpleasant it is, and not to be afraid to tell the truth no matter how undesirable it is.

The business with Iran worked out really not bad. The coordinated actions of the British and the Soviet troops decided the result. This is going to be in the future as well because our troops will be acting together. But Iran is only an episode. The faith of the war will be decided certainly not in Iran.

The Soviet Union, as well as England, does not want war with Japan. The Soviet Union does not consider possible to break agreements, including the agreement with Japan about neutrality. But if Japan will break that agreement and attack the Soviet Union, it will meet an appropriate rebuff from the Soviet troops.

And finally, let me bring my gratitude for the expressed by You admiration for the actions of the Soviet troops, conducting the bloody war with Hitler's robber's hordes for our common liberating cause.

XIII. "Fuel means survival..."

We moved from my grandmother's flat into my aunt's apartment. Fortunately, the place was intact, and the furniture, especially a bed and a sofa, were still there. My aunt was particularly worrying about the baby-boy and my grandmother, laying on the cold floor during the nights: the weather was getting increasingly colder - a severe winter was quickly approaching...

Meanwhile, life in the city was slowly recovering. More people, leaving their shelters during daytime could be seen in the streets, gathering together and exchanging information.

A large group of Romanian Jews from Bucharest and other cities were deported, and came to Mogilyov. Those people had been well dressed, and, obviously, had some means for life support...

More and more Ukrainian farmers would come to the market place, and bring their products to exchange for cloth and other household items.

The commandant of the city was declaring different orders: not to be in the streets after 7pm, or before 8 am; not gather in large groups unless by order from the authorities; to carry on your cloth a yellow David's Star, etc., etc.

During that "renaissance" my aunt managed to exchange some items for two large sacks of corn flour. Each time we transported the sack to our place on the same two-wheel bogie, which we used to carry my grandaunt Frima to her final destination...

The two sacks of corn flour meant, that if nothing else would interfere, we may survive the coming winter, and not die of hunger... So, now our survival (shouldn't we be killed by the Nazis, or their collaborators) in the coming winter depended totally on fuel.

Sources of fuel were limited to ruins of buildings, destroyed by bombing, and unattended wooden structures...

An early and very cold severe winter of 1941 - 1942 set in. I - the only "man" in the household (not to count the baby-boy) was assigned to supply wood and water for the household.

In a short period of time, I gained experience in finding wood. I was climbing over the ruins of the demolished buildings, dragging out pieces of wooden beams, floors, window frames and doors.

That had been deadly-dangerous exercises - every moment the hanging-up ruins could collapse, and often surely did collapse!

The wooden pieces, which could be collected safely, had already been collected by others...

I learned to evade from about to collapse, or collapsing and falling down walls, floors. I also learned to evaluate the situation and its possible dangers even before I was starting to drag out wooden pieces. I was becoming - by necessity - a practical demolition engineer...

Some of the pieces had been heavier, than I could drag out. So, I quickly learned that I need to have an axe, which, from now, I was carrying with me. I would split a heavy piece with my axe, or if I would not be able to do it, I would try at least to chip of smaller pieces. I was gaining confidence, and, so far, kept my family warm...

Later, in addition to the axe and ropes, I would have also in my arsenal wedges and hooks...

Zjukov succeeded – Leningrad withstood !!!

Somewhere else in the world, the battle for Leningrad was becoming increasingly severe. The following report of Army General G.K. Zjukov, Commander of the Leningrad Front, to the Supreme Commander Stalin provides an image about the severity of that battle.

To People's Commissar of Defense Comrade J.V. Stalin (by code)

During September 17, 1941 there had been persistent combats along the entire front to the South of Leningrad. Especially fierce combats continued in the region Razbegay, Strel'na, Uritsk.

Here, the enemy, in addition to five previously attacking divisions, entered into the combat one more infantry division. As a result, the left flank of our 8th Army had been driven back by the enemy to Strel'na. The right wing formations of our 42nd Army lost for a while Uritsk, but then counterattacked and recaptured it back. The region of Ivanovo, Sosnovaya Polyana is being cleaned-up from small groups of the enemy.

The enemy conducted persistent attacks in the direction of Pushkin City, where he entered one more tank division in addition to four infantry divisions previously offending that area.

As a result of severe combats, the formations of our 55th Army had been driven back, and at the end of the day conducted combats in the North/Eastern part of Pushkin City and along the highway Putrolovo.

The enemy's airforce acted mainly in the battle field, especially active along the front of our 55th Army, where up to 200 air planes participated in the combats. The enemy conducted three air attacks on the right bank of the Neva River in the region Porogi. Our airforce attacked and bombed accumulations of the enemy's troops and their approaching columns.

The following tasks had been given to the troops of the Front: the 8th Army - to conduct a blow from the frontier Havony, Pavkulya in the direction on Krasnoe Selo by a force not less than five divisions; the 42nd Army - persistently defend the frontier in its possession; The 55th Army to restore the position, which had been lost.

**ZJUKOV
ZJDANOV**

The decisiveness, purposefulness and, in critical moments, cruelty of the new Commander of the Leningrad Front brought the required results. Zjukov succeeded in the most compressed times to mobilize even the very scanty reserves, which he had in his possession. In the army appeared confidence in its success, and the troops fought with increasing persistence on their frontiers. G.K. Zjukov required from the troops to continually counterattack the enemy.

With a sensitivity of only a true military genius, Zjukov found the optimal methods for conducting military actions, which lead to success even in such critical situation, in which was the Leningrad Front. Zjukov succeeded in the fundamental: Leningrad withstood.

At the end of September 1941, the Leningrad Front had stabilized. The Commander of the Group of German armies "North" General-Fieldmarshal Leeb not only was unable to relocate to other areas a part of his forces, but was asking for additional troops to organize a new offensive on Leningrad.

The troops of the Leningrad Front had created a strong defense, and successfully prevented all attempts of the enemy to burst to the city. The enemy finally exhausted, and transferred to the defense. General-Fieldmarshal Leeb reported at that time to General-Fieldmarshal Brauhich, Supreme Commander of the German Land Forces, that he can not continue the offensive on Leningrad with the troops left in his possession.

Near Leningrad, first time during the war the German troops had been forced to transfer from strategic offense to a prolonged positional siege. Now the main goal of the enemy was to suffocate Leningrad in a total blockade.

Lack of forces and their combat preparedness, absence of experience in offensive actions in the conditions of a wooded-swampy landscape, inability of commanders and headquarters to manage the troops in complex combat situations had not allow Zjukov to quickly deblockade Leningrad. And time to do that he did not have - in the Moscow direction the situation had sharply worsened, and his military talent had been required there.

The troops and population of Leningrad, which had been cut off from the Main Land, had to prepare to a long-long and severe fight for their life...

11

Received 6 September 1941

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

1. I am answering immediately in the spirit of Your message. While we would not stop in front of any difficulties, there is no possibility to accomplish such a British action in the West (accepting action in the air), which would allow to distract the German forces from the Eastern Front. There is also no possibility to create a Second front on the Balkans without the help of Turkey. I want, if Your Excellency would like to, introduce to You all those basses, which brought the chiefs of headquarters to such a conclusion. Those basses have already been discussed today with Your Ambassador in a special meeting, in which I and the Chiefs of headquarters participated. An action, leading only to a high-cost failure, no matter how good would be its motives - can be helpful only to Hitler.
2. The information in my possession creates an impression that the German invasion already passed the highest point of its stress, because the winter will bring Your heroic armies a respite (that is, however, my personal opinion).
3. Regarding the supplies. We clearly realize the heavy losses, experienced by the Russian industry, and will do everything to help You. I am telegraphing to President Roosevelt with the purpose to accelerate the arrival here in London the mission of Harriman, and we will try even before the Moscow conference to advise You about the amount of airplanes and tanks, which we together promise You to send monthly along with supplies of rubber, aluminum, cloth, etc. On our part we are ready to send You from the British production a half of the monthly quantity of airplanes and tanks, which You are asking for. We hope that the USA will satisfy the second half of Your requirements. We will do everything to start the shipment of the supplies immediately.
4. We already ordered to supply the Iranian railroad with trains to increase its mobile capability from two trains in each direction daily... to twelve trains in each direction daily. That will be achieved by spring 1942, to that time the mobile capability will be gradually increasing. Steam locomotives and wagons from England will be send

around the cape Good Hope after their reconstruction for working on oil. Along the railroad will be developed a water supply system. First 48 steam locomotives and 400 wagons will be shipped in the nearest future.

5. We are ready to develop with You coordinated plans. Will the British armies be strong enough to invade the European continent in 1942 depends on events, which are difficult to foresee. Most likely, it will be possible to provide You with assistance in the Extreme North when there will come the polar night. We hope to raise the contingent of our armies in the Middle East to three quarters of a million men by the end of this year and then to one million by the summer of 1942. As soon as German-Italian troops will be annihilated in Libya, those troops will be able to incorporate into the front on Your Southern flank, and, as we can hope, to influence Turkey to keep at least honest neutrality. Meanwhile, we will continue bombarding Germany from the air with increasing intensity, we will also keep the seas open and fight for our life.
6. In the first paragraph of Your Message You used the word "to sell". We do not look on that business from that point of view and never sought about the payment. It would be better if any help, provided to You by us, would be based on the same foundation of comradeship, on which is built the American law of land-lease, i.e. without formal money calculations. We are ready to the fullest extent to put pressure on Finland, including an immediate official notification that we will declare to Finland war should she advance further her old borders. We also are asking the USA to take all the possible steps to influence Finland.

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XIV. Hanging over the icehouse.

... That morning, in my relentless search for wood, I came across the ice-house. Here and there, I noticed other wood hunters - all adults -, pointing at the structure, and considering different versions of its demolition.

The ice-house introduced a pit in the ground about 18 - 20 feet deep, covered with a roof, made from wooden trusses. The trusses had been covered with wooden boards, covered, in turn, with asphalt shingles.

Of course, the boards and the trusses were the center of attention of the "wood hunters".

The roof of the icehouse was damaged in a few places, so that the boards and the trusses could be seen under the shingles. The boards had been nailed to the trusses.

A heavy wooden beam, which was lay down on the surface of the ground along the perimeter of the pit, and supported the trusses together with the entire roof, was also damaged, actually broken and separated in a few places.

I figured, that I could separate the boards from the trusses in places not covered with shingles

I climbed up the roof with my axe, and started to push its edge between two boards, where they were nailed to a truss. The board separated from the truss after I lied down on the axe's handle with my entire weight.

I continued to work on that board, and separated a portion of it. Then, I started to work on the next board.

Meanwhile, other wood hunters started to work in different places on the roof. One man worked in a few meters from me, trying to get a portion of the wooden beam, which supported the trusses.

My ropes and other tools laid on the ground nearby.

Suddenly, a loud noise appeared, and the truss (or a couple of them, from which I separated a couple of boards, started to move down the pit, not being supported anymore by the supporting beam, which was not only broken, but also split.

I held fast on the boards, which I tried to separate a few seconds prior to the collapse of the roof...

I was now hanging, clutched at the boards, over the pit, about 16 - 18 feet from its bottom... Fortunately for me, the man, who worked near, saw the collapse of the roof on our side. He grabbed my rope, made a loop, and climbed up the roof to a safe spot, from which he started to lower the loop to me, saying: "Hold on, young man! This is not yet the end of the world! Hold on!"

He pooled me out from the pit. I got out of the accident again with just a few bruises and with some wood...

Moscow in Danger – Stalin turns to Zjukov

Elsewhere in the world, Hitler's plans to capture Moscow by August 15, and to finish the war with Russia on October 1, 1941 had been far from accomplishment. However, that did not cool down the enemy, but added enthusiasm to his ambitions.

On September 6, 1941, Hitler signed a directive concerning a large autumn offensive on the Eastern Front. Ten days later, General-Fieldmarshal F.von Bok, Commander of the

"Center" Group of German armies, sent a directive to his troops concerning their preparation to an operation of capturing Moscow. That operation received a code name "Typhoon".

The essence of the operation was to conduct three powerful blows from the regions Duhovschina (3rd Tank Group), Roslavl' (4th Tank Group) and Shostka (2nd Tank Group) in the North and North/East directions with the purpose to brake the defense of the Soviet Troops, and then to surround and annihilate them in the regions of Vyas'ma and Bryansk.

The Soviet troops in the Moscow direction conducted active offensive against the "Center" Groups of German armies. In the 20ies of September, intelligent information started to arrive about Germans' preparation to a large offensive. The situation required to take immediate counteractions.

On October 5, 1941, Stalin called Zjukov over the phone:

- *I have only one question: could you immediately fly to Moscow. Because of the complexity of the situation on the left wing of the Reserve Front, the Supreme Headquarters would like to discuss with you the situation.*

Zjukov:

- *I am asking for the permission to fly to Moscow in the morning on October 6.*
- *Stalin: OK. We'll wait for your arrival in Moscow tomorrow.*

However, due to the complications on the Leningrad Front, Zjukov appeared in Stalin's Headquarters only on October 7, 1941 around 5p.m.

Stalin was sick, and was located in his apartment in Kremlin. He immediately led Zjukov to a map and pointed to the area in the Vyaz'ma region.

- *Here,- Stalin said,- appeared a very dangerous situation. I cannot get from the Western and Reserve Fronts distinctive reports regarding the actual situation. Go to Shaposhnikov, he will inform you about the currently available data. Then, immediately drive to the Headquarters of the Western Front, scrupulously analyze the situation, and call me any time. I will be waiting.*
- *Let me go?*
- *Wait... Tell me, could the Germans in the nearest future organize a new offensive on Leningrad?*
- *I think - no. The enemy experienced heavy losses, and moved tank and motorized divisions from Leningrad somewhere to the central direction.*
- *Where, in your opinion, is the enemy going to apply those tank and motorized divisions?*
- *Most likely, on the Moscow direction.*

Looking at the map, Stalin said: "It seems that they are already here ..."

On October 10, 1941, late in the night Zjukov arrived at the Headquarters of the Western Front in Krasnovidovo. Here was working a Commission of the State Defense Committee. The Commission tried to define the reasons of the catastrophe of the forces of the Western Front. Zjukov had been called to the phone. Stalin called:

- The Supreme Command decided to remove General Konev from the position of Commander of the Western Front and assign you for that position. Do you have any objections?*
- What kind of objections could there be?*
- What are we going to do with Konev? - asked Stalin.*

Stalin intended to bring Konev to trial for the demolition of the Western Front. And only Zjukov's interference saved Konev's life.

- I think, Konev should be assigned to a group of forces on the Kalinin's direction.*
- OK, - Stalin agreed. - Under your command are assigned the formations left from the Reserve Front and formations located on the Mojaysk line. As soon as possible, take everything under your control and act. I already signed the order, which is being transferred to the fronts.*
- I am starting to execute your directives, but I am asking to urgently provide the front with larger reserves, because in the nearest future it is necessary to expect from the Germans a blow in the Moscow direction.*

Day and night was conducted highly stressful work in the soviet troops. People had been critically exhausted because of fatigue and sleeplessness. However, motivated by sense of responsibility, they conducted a colossal job creating a reliable stable defense of the front on the approach to Moscow.

... Starting October 13, 1941 severe combats unfolded on all major directions, leading to Moscow. The bombing of Moscow was becoming increasingly severe day after day. Moscow had been bombarded almost every night. However, to that time a great job had been accomplished regarding the enforcement of the anti aircraft defense. Millions of Muscovites had been actively trained for anti aircraft defense.

Meanwhile, on the approach to Moscow had been constructed a deeply-echeloned anti - tank defense, anti-tank areas and regions had been created. The army had been replenished with troops, ammunition, armor, and means of communication, engineering and material-technical supplies. During November 1 - November 15, the Western Front received as replenishment 100,000 soldiers and officers, 300 tanks, 2,000 guns.

The Supreme Command concentrated in the Moscow region large groups of fighting, storming and bombarding airforce. Those reserves had been concentrated on the most dangerous directions. The majority of troops had been concentrated on the Volokolamsk-Klinsk and Istrinsk directions, where, as it had been assumed by the Soviet Command, was supposed to be conducted the main blow of the armor-tank groups of the enemy.

Reserve troops had also been pooled in to the region Tula -Serpukhov: here had been expected a repeated blow of the enemy's 2nd Tank and 4th Field armies.

At the beginning of November the weather turned cold. Snow fell. The Front and army depots had been receiving in large quantities half-length sheepskin coats, felt boots, warm underwear, fur hats, padded jackets. In the middle of November the Soviet soldiers had been warmly dressed, and felt the support of the entire nation.

At the beginning of November between Stalin and Zjukov took place the following phone conversation:

- How does the enemy behave? - asked Stalin.*
- They are finishing the concentration of their shock groups, and, perhaps, in the nearest future will conduct an offensive.*
- Where do you expect the major blow?*
- From the Volokolamsk region. The Tank Group of Guderian, apparently, will conduct a blow in the direction of Kashira.*
- Shaposhnikov and myself think, that the enemy's blows, which are being prepared, must be prevented by our counterblows. One of those counterblows must be conducted in the Volokolamsk region, the other - from the Serpukhov region into the flank of the Germans' 4th Army. Apparently, they concentrate there large forces to conduct a blow on Moscow.*
- What forces, Comrade Supreme Commander, are we going to use to conduct those counterblows? The Western Front does not have free forces. We have forces only for defense.*
- In the Volokolamsk region use the right flank formations of Rokossovsky's Army, a tank division and the cavalry corps of General Dovator. In the Serpukhov region, use the cavalry corps of General Belov, , the Tank division of colonel Getman and a part of forces of the 49th Army.*
- I think, that now this would be unwise to do. We can not throw on counterblows, the success of which is questionable, the last reserves of the Front. In such a case we will not have anything to enforce the defense of our armies when the enemy will turn to offense its shock troops.*
- Your Front has six armies. Is that not enough?*
- But the line of defense is quite stretched: together with the crooks it stretches for more then 600 kilometers. We have very little reserves in the depth, particularly in the center of the front.*
- The question of the counterblows you may consider resolved. Plan report tonight,- discontentedly cut-off Stalin.*

In about two hours, the Headquarters of the Western Front gave an order to the Commanders of the 16th and 49th Armies about conducting counterblows, which had been reported to the Supreme Command. However, those counterblows, where the main force used had been the cavalry, did not produce the results, expected by Stalin. The enemy was still strong enough. Only in the Alexin region the Western Front achieved significant results: the formations of the enemy's 4th Army experienced there large losses and could not participate in the general offensive on Moscow.

12

Sent 13 September 1941

Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. Churchill

I introduced in my last message the opinion of the Government of the USSR about creation of the Second Front as the main method of our common cause. In response to Your message, where You again emphasize the impossibility to create at this moment the Second Front, I can only repeat, that the absence of the Second Front pours water on the waterwheel of our common enemies.

I do not have any doubts that the English Government is wishing the Soviet Union victory, and is searching for ways to achieve that goal. If the creation of the Second Front, in the opinion of the English Government, seems to be impossible, then, may be it is possible to find another way of an active military help to the Soviet Union against the common enemy? It seems to me, that England could without a risk to land 25 - 30 divisions in Arhangel'sk, or to transfer them through Iran into the Southern regions of the USSR for military cooperation with the Soviet troops on the USSR territory as it took place during the last war in France. This would be a great help. It seems to me that such a help would be a serious blow to Hitler's aggression.

I am bringing my gratitude for the promise of a monthly help from England with aluminum, airplanes and tanks.

I can only welcome the fact that the English Government thinks about delivery of that help not in term's buy-sell of airplanes, aluminum and tanks, but in order of comradeship cooperation.

I hope that the English Government will have enough occasions to assure itself that the USSR Government is able to properly appreciate the help of its allies.

Two words about the note of Mr. Cripps, the Ambassador of Great Britain in Moscow, transferred to V.M. Molotov on 12 September 1941. It is written in that note: "In the case, if the Soviet Government will be forced to annihilate its military ships in Leningrad so that they would not be captured by the enemy, the Government of Her Majesty will recognize the request of the Soviet Government after the war regarding the participation of the Government of Her Majesty in replacement of the annihilated at such circumstances ships".

The Soviet Government understands and appreciates the readiness of the English Government to partially replace the loss which will be inflicted on the Soviet Union in case of annihilation of the Soviet ships in Leningrad. There is no doubt that in case of a necessity the Soviet ships in Leningrad are really going to be destroyed by Soviet people. But responsible for that loss is not England, but Germany. I think, because of that, the loss must be replenished after the war by Germany.

XV. The before-dawn encounter

...A day before the ice-house accident, returning from a wood hunting trip, I had spotted and observed a destroyed building, from which I could still drag out significant pieces of wood.

To that time, I have learned that the earlier I would start my work, the less is the chance that I might encounter somebody in the streets, and the safer and more effective would be my job. All that (I figured) because the population would not take risks to disobey the commandant's order not to appear in the streets before 8 am.

And , on the other hand, the winter was extremely cold, and the patrol would prefer to sit in the warm instead of being chilled to the marrow along empty, potentially dangerous streets, blown through by severe cold winds.

... It was, probably, not even 6 o'clock in the morning when I was returning from my hunt, pooling the sledge loaded with wood. The streets were covered with a thick layer of snow, and the sledge was sliding quietly behind me.

It was dark, but not completely: some light was coming from a young crescent moon. I was moving along a street, most buildings on which had been destroyed or heavily damaged by Nazi bombing. Some of those buildings had only the outside walls left.

I was, probably 80 to 100 meters from the corner, at which I could turn to my street, when I noticed two figures, coming from around the street's corner and headed toward me. This was a patrol...

I tried to hide in the shade of the nearest building, which was destroyed and had only the outside walls. But they already noted me, and started to run toward me shouting: "Hende hoh!! Hende hoh!!"

The door opening into the building was blocked with ruins from inside. The openings of the basement windows at the street level were also blocked, but one such window still had a little opening, into which I could squeeze in. And that is what I did - a larger person would not be able to do it. All of that happened in a few seconds. While I was trying to find a way to escape, and then crawling into the saving hole, the Nazis started to shoot toward me.

As soon as I was inside the walls of what was once a four-story building, I felt much safer. I knew, that the patrol would not be able (unless they would do something

extraordinary) to get where I was. The buildings in this street were built without clearances between two adjacent buildings.

Mountains of ruins and debris were inside of the box, left from that building. Some floors and inside walls still were hanging over ready to fall down...

I found another little imperceptible hole under a hill of ruins, and squeezed myself into that shelter - just in case. From that place I could hear the exited voices of the Nazis. They made a few shots into the hole, into which I escaped, and a few shots into other basement window openings. After that, I heard them talking for a short while, and then walking away... I could not believe, that I was still alive...

The Battle for Moscow

...Elsewhere in the world, to continue the offensive on Moscow, Hitler's Command pulled fresh forces, and by November 15, 1941 concentrated against the Western Front 51 divisions, including 31 infantry divisions, 13 tank divisions and 7 motorized divisions, well staffed, and supported with artillery, tanks and other combat equipment.

On the Volokolamsk-Klinsk and Istrinsk directions against Rokossovsky's army had been concentrated the enemy's 3rd and 4th tank groups including seven tank divisions, three motorized divisions and four infantry divisions, supported by almost 2,000 guns and a powerful aircraft group.

On the Tula-Kashira direction against the 50th Army had been concentrated a shock group of the enemy's troops with a total number of twelve divisions including four tank divisions and three motorized divisions. That group had also been supported by a powerful aircraft formation.

The 4th Field Army of the enemy, including six army corps, unfolded on the Zvenigorod, Kubinka, Narofominsk, Podol'sk and Serpuhov directions. That army had an assignment to bound the troops of defense of the Western Front by frontal blows, weaken those troops, and then to inflict a blow in the center of the Western Front in the Moscow direction.

The second stage of the offensive on Moscow the German Command started on November 15, 1941 with a blow to the 30th Army of the Kalininsk Front. To the South of the Voljsky reservoir that army had a very weak defense.

Simultaneously, the enemy inflicted a blow to the troops of the Western Front, i.e. to the right flank of Rokossovsky's Army. An additional blow had been inflicted in the band of that army, in the Teryaeva Sloboda region.

Against the 30th Army of the Kalininsky Front the enemy throw up to 300 tanks, against which only 56 Soviet light tanks with weak arming withstand. The defense could not keep up, and had been quickly broken through.

In the morning on November 16, the enemy troops started to quickly develop offensive from the Volokolamsk region to Klin. In that region there had not been Soviet reserves because they, in accordance with the order of the Supreme Command, had been thrown into the Volokolamsk region to conduct a counterblow. Here the enemy had bound them.

The same day the enemy's troops inflicted a powerful blow in the Volokolamsk region. On the Istrinsk direction conducted the offensive two tank divisions and two infantry German divisions. Against 150 light Soviet tanks the enemy throw 400 medium tanks. Severe battles unfolded. Especially persistently fought the rifle divisions of Rokossovsky's army: the 316th division of General Panfilov, the 78th division of colonel Beloborodov and the 18th division of General Chernyshev, especial regiment of Mladentsev, 1st Guardian Tank Brigade, 23rd, 27th, 28th special tank brigades and the Cavalry Group of General Dovator.

On November 17, 1941 at 23 p.m. the 30th Army of the Kalininsky Front had been assigned by the Supreme Command to the Western Front. This, again, stretched the line of that front to the North. General-Major Lelyushenko had been assigned as the Commander of the 30th Army.

The battles, which took place on November 16 - 18 had been extremely difficult for the Soviet Army. The enemy, ignoring his losses, barged ahead, striving by any means to burst to Moscow with his tank wedges.

However, the deeply echelon artillery and anti-tank defense, and well organized interaction of all kind of armed forces did not allow the enemy to burst through the defense of the 16th Army. Slowly, but in complete order that army retreated to preliminarily prepared and already occupied by the artillery positions, where its units persistently fought, beating off the attacks of the enemy.

With unprecedented bravery acted the 1st Guardian Tank Brigade, assigned to the 16th Army. In October that brigade (then 4th Tank Brigade) heroically fought near Oryol and Mtsensk, for what it had been awarded the title First Guardian. Now, in November, defending the approaches to Moscow, the Guardians-tank drivers elevated even more their heroic reputation.

The workers of Moscow worked 12 - 18-hour shifts, and provided the defenders of Moscow with weaponry, combat machinery and ammunition.

However, the threat to the capital city had not disappeared: the enemy slowly but consistently approached to Moscow.

Soon after a tactical burst of the enemy in the band of the 30th Army, worrying Stalin called Zjukov and asked:

-Are you sure that we will not give up Moscow? I am asking you with pain in my soul. Tell me honestly, as a communist.

- Moscow, we will certainly not give up. But we need additionally not less than two armies and at least 200 tanks.*
- That is not bad that you have such a confidence. Call the General Headquarters, and consider where to concentrate the two reserve armies, which you are asking for. They will be ready at the end of November. Tanks, at the moment, we will not be able to give you.*

Within a half of an hour Commander of the Western Front Zjukov and Chief of General Headquarters Vasilevskiy agreed that the 1st Blow Army and the 10th Army, and all the formations of the 20th Army will be assigned to the Western Front. The 1st Blow Army to be concentrated in the Yahroma region, the 10th Army - in the Ryazan' region.

On the Tula-Moscow operational direction the enemy started the offensive on November 18. On the Venyovsk direction, defended by two rifle divisions of the 50th Army, the offensive had been conducted by three German tank divisions. That group burst through the defense, and occupied the region Bolohovo-Dedilovo. For counter action, Zjukov throw into that region one infantry and one cavalry division. Severe battles, accompanied by massive heroism of the Soviet troops, had been going on in that region day and night.

Especially courageously fought the units of the 413th infantry division. However, on November 21, 1941 the main forces of Guderian's Tank Army had occupied Uzlovaya and Stalinogorsk.

On November 26 the 3rd Tank division of the enemy made room on the expense of the Soviet troops, and cut-off the railroad and highway Tula-Moscow in the region northern Tula. However, the 1st Guardian Cavalry Corps of General Belov, 112 Tank division and some other formations in the Kashira region did not let the enemy to advance further in that area. To help the fighting there units General Zjukov relocated into that region additionally the 173rd infantry division and the 15th Guardian Mortar regimen ("Katyusha's").

On November 27 the Cavalry Corps of General Belov in interaction with the 112 Tank division, 173rd Infantry division and other units inflicted an impetuous counterblow to Guderian's troops, and throw them to the South by 10 - 15 kilometers in the direction to Venyov.

Up to November 30 heavy battles continued in that region. The enemy could not achieve here any success. The Commander of the 2nd Tank Army Guderian became convinced, that it was impossible to break the persistent resistance of the Soviet forces in the region

Kashira-Tula, and make their way through in the direction to Moscow. The Germans had been forced to convert to defense in that area.

The Soviet Forces, who fought in that area beat off all blows of the enemy, inflicted on the enemy huge losses, and did not let them to advance to Moscow.

Even a more severe situation appeared on the right wing of the Western Front, in the region Istra-Klin-Solnechnogorsk, where the 16th Army of General Rokossowskiy persistently defended the positions.

On November 23 the German tanks occupied Klin. In order not to expose the Soviet troops to the threat of encirclement, during the night of November 24 they had been transferred to the next rear boundary. After heavy battles the 16th Army withdraw from Klin. Due to the loss of Klin it appeared a clearance between the 16th and the 30th armies. That clearance had been defended by only a weak group of Soviet troops.

On November 25, 1941 the 16th Army withdraw also from Solnechnogorsk. Here appeared a catastrophic situation. The Military Council of the Western Front directed here everything it could from other areas of the Front. Separate groups of tanks, units of soldiers with anti-tank rifles, artillery batteries, anti-aircraft units had been sent to that region. It had been necessary by any means to detain the enemy on that dangerous area until the arrival of the 7th Guardian Infantry division from the Serpuhov region, two tank brigades and two anti-tank artillery regiments from the Reserve of the Supreme Command.

The front of the Soviet defense had been bending like an arch, it had been appearing very weak places. It seemed that at any moment would appear something irreparable. But No! The troops fought to death, and after receiving reinforcement created again and again an irresistible front of defense.

In the evening of November 29 a German tank brigade took advantage on a weak defense of the bridge over the channel Moscow-Volga and captured the bridge, and advanced behind the channel. Here it had been stopped by the vanguard units of the just arrived 1st Blow Army of General V.I.Kuznetsov, and thrown back to its initial position.

13

Received 19 September 1941

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

1. Harriman's mission came in a body and is involved in work the entire day with Lord Biverbrook and his staff. The goal is the study of the entire problem concerning resources to be able to work out together with You a concrete program of monthly shipments using all the existing routes and in that way to help You to replenish the

loss inflicted on Your military industry. According to President Roosevelt's idea that first plan must embrace the period to the end of June, but we, naturally will continue to render You help until the victory. I hope the meeting can be opened in Moscow the 25th of this month, but that should not be made public until all the participants would safely arrive at the destination. About the routs and means of transportation You will be advised later.

2. I am giving a great meaning to the business of opening a through rout from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea not only by railroad, but also by an automobile highway, to the construction of which we hope to attract the Americans with their energy and organizational abilities. Lord Biverbrook will be able to explain the entire plan of supply and transportation: he is in the friendliest relationship with Mr. Harriman.
3. All possible theaters of war, in which we would be able to accomplish a military cooperation with You, had been considered by (our military) headquarters. The most favorable possibilities appear to be, of course, on both flanks - Northern and Southern. Should we be able to act successfully in Norway, that would produce a strong influence on the position of Sweden. But currently we do possess neither military forces, nor ship tonnage for the accomplishment of that project. With regard to South, the role of Turkey is very important: if to secure the help from Turkey - in our possession will appear an additional powerful army. Turkey would like to join us, but is afraid and not without grounds. Perhaps, promising her help with significant British military forces and supply of technical means, in which Turkey has a deficit, it is possible to render on her a decisive influence. We will study with You any other form of active support, because the only goal is to bring into motion against our common enemy maximal forces.
4. I completely agree that replenishment of the damage to the Russian Fleet must be done first of all on the expense of Germany. The victory, obviously, will give into our possession large German and Italian military ships, and, in our opinion, those would be the most suitable for the replenishment of the damage to the Russian Fleet.

XVI. The last candle for a lady

... Frequently, I was passing through the corridor of what was before the war the Red Army Officer's House. I used this passage to shorten my exposure to the cold, especially to the bone chilling winds, on my way to a place (and back), where a friend of my aunt's family was making primitive "candies" in a little room. He would give me a few "candies", or a half of a cup of sugar. And I would carry it back to my house as the greatest treasure. At that time it really was a great treasure... I would not even think to open it before handing it to my aunt...

... Along that corridor were located rooms, originally used by Red Army officers and their families. Now, those rooms had been occupied by people, whose apartment buildings or houses had been destroyed by Nazi bombing...

Along the wall, across each room, had been built-in benches, attached to the wall and also to pillars at both ends. The pillars and the bench formed a semi-closed space, somehow protected from the winds, blowing along the corridor...

... Once, at the beginning of the winter, walking along that corridor, I met a lady near one of the benches. She, probably, just arrived here, and was trying to organize out of the niche with the bench in it something like a living space. Her simple belongings were right here on the bench. I said "Hello" to her and passed by. She was very friendly, and reminded me of my grandaunt, who we buried a couple months ago...

The bench-niche was the lady's living room, dining room, kitchen and bedroom - all in one.

... Some times, passing by, I would see her boiling water on a little oil-stove in a small pot, or repairing her cloth, or reading a book... She would stop me, and we would talk for a short while. She would ask me about my family and other things... She was a music teacher and a very kind great lady...

She was suffering from severe cold. Once, I found a piece of plywood. I divided it into two pieces, and we adjusted them to her niche so that one would form a cubicle, and protect her feet from the drafts, blowing along the corridor, and the other piece would do the same in the area of her head when she would lie down...

That helped, but not too much... The lady was becoming weak: she, probably, suffered from pneumonia and definitely from hunger...

... I told my aunt and my grandmother about her. They said: "Next time, when you see her, tell her that she can move into our house". We did not have a bed for her, and I started to look for one in the ruined buildings.

... A couple days after that, I found a small bed, and brought it on my sleds to our place. Then I rushed to the Red Army house to bring to the lady good news. It was already too late... I found her dead, lain on her bench with her hands stretched along her body and her eyes closed - somebody took care of that...

Her face still retained a noble expression... And behind the "pillow" somebody lighted a candle - a last candle for a noble lady...

The Last stage of the Battle for Moscow – Zjukov's Counteroffensive Plan; Zjukov did not sleep for 11 days

Elsewhere in the world, on December 1, 1941 the German troops, unexpectedly for the Soviets, burst in the center of the Western Front between the 5th and the 33rd armies, and headed on the highway to Kubinka. However, near the village Akulovo the Germans had been stopped by the 32nd Infantry division, which annihilated a part of the German tanks. At the same time, many German tanks had been blown up on the minefields. Then, the German tank formations turned to Golitsyno, where they had been completely demolished by the Reserve of the Western Front and the just arrived units of the 5th and 33rd Armies. The enemy left on the battlefield more than 10,000 dead, 50 demolished tanks and a lot of other combat equipment.

By November 15, 1941 the enemy's group of armies Center contained 74 divisions, including 47 infantry divisions, 14 tank divisions, 8 motorized divisions, three security divisions and three separate brigades. They contained about one million men, 11,670 guns and mortars of different caliber (not including 50-mm), about 1,500 tanks, and up to 650 air crafts. The combat quantity of the divisions had been still high: in the infantry divisions - 13,500, in the tank divisions - 12,800, in the motorized divisions - 11,200 men.

High saturation of those forces with artillery, mortars and automatic weapons provided the conduct of military actions under powerful fire accompaniment. The average operational density on the entire front of the Center Group of armies was about 12 kilometers per one division and 13 guns and mortars per one kilometer of the front.

On the front of the offensive of the enemy 500 kilometers long between Kalinin and Efremov the average operational density was 9 kilometers per division and 17 guns and mortars per one kilometer of the front. Almost all tank and motorized divisions of the Center Group of armies had been included into the main blow groups of the enemy. In the directions of their blows the operational density had been increasing not less than by three times on the expense of the front areas of secondary importance.

The Center Group of armies had been confronted by the Western and Kalinin Fronts, and two right-wing armies of the Southern-Western Front. Most formations of these fronts conducted heavy defensive battles during October and experienced heavy losses in manpower, weaponry and combat equipment. The average quantity of men on the list in the soviet rifle divisions had been no more than 5,500 with sharply reduced fire power. The average operational density was 11 - 12 kilometers per division and no more than 4 guns and mortars per one kilometer of the front. On the front Kalinin - Efremov, where the main actions unfolded, the average operational density of the Soviet troops had been slightly higher than 9 - 10 kilometers per division, and up to 6 guns and mortars per one kilometer of front.

The general preponderance of forces by the middle of November 1941 on the entire Moscow direction still was on the enemy's side. The German-Fascist troops on the front between Selizjarovo and Tima had an advantage over the Soviet troops in general in manpower by 1.9 times; in artillery: in field guns - by three times, in mortars - by three times, in anti-tank artillery almost by seven times. The enemy's command had about 1,500 tanks and 650 air crafts for direct blow on Moscow against 890 Soviet tanks (90% light, outdated systems) and about 1,000 air crafts.

So, only in air crafts the balance of forces had been formally for the first time in favor of the Soviet troops. However, the quality of the German air crafts at that time still had been better than that of the Soviet air crafts.

At the end of November 1941, judging on the character of actions and the power of blows of all groups of German troops, one could feel that the enemy is exhausting, and does not have forces and means for offensive operations.

The enemy, during the battles for Moscow, stretched his troops to such an extend, that in the final combats there these troops lost their bursting ability. Within 20 days of the second stage of the Moscow offensive the Germans lost 155,000 soldiers and officers, about 800 tanks, hundreds of guns and a large number of air crafts.

The troops of the Western Front also experienced great losses, had been overtired, and however restrained the defense. And, after receiving additional reserves, increased their force tenfold in the battle with the enemy. More than a million-strong group of the selected Hitler's troops was crashed against iron firmness, courage and heroism of the Soviet Forces backed up by their people, Capital City, motherland.

According to General Zjukov, one of the main factors of the success of the Western Front was the fact that at the beginning of November the Soviet Command of that Front on time defined the concentration of the enemy's blow groups on the flanks of the front's defense. As a result the directions of the potential major blows of the enemy had been properly defined.

The blow fist of the enemy faced a deeply constructed defense, equipped with sufficient quantities of anti-tank and engineering means. Here, on the most dangerous directions, had been concentrated all major Soviet tank formations.

Zjukov witnessed: "On the last stage of the defensive battle (for Moscow) November 25 through December 5, 1941 I did not sleep for eleven days in a row being under highly nervous stress. Then, when our heroes started to drive the enemy from Moscow, I fall down, and slept more than two days in a row, waking up only to find out how the offensive is developing. Even Stalin, when calling over the telephone, would not allow waking me up".

In such circumstances had been conducted the preparation of the counteroffensive near Moscow. On November 29, 1941 Zjukov called Stalin, reported the situation, and asked him to give the order to start the counteroffensive.

Stalin was listening attentively, and then asked:

- *Are you sure, that the enemy achieved a crisis condition, and does not have the possibility to introduce into the business some new very large group of forces?*
- *The enemy is exhausted. But if we now do not liquidate the dangerous wedges, inserted into our defense, the Germans would be able to enforce their troops in the Moscow region with large reserves on the expense of their Northern and Southern groups of their troops. Then the situation could seriously become very complex.*

Stalin said that he would consider that proposal with the General Headquarters. Zjukov asked V.D. Sokolovskiy, Chief of Headquarters of the Western Front, who shared Zjukov's idea of the timing of the counteroffensive, to contact the General Headquarters and to support Zjukov's proposal on the expediency of the immediate start of the counteroffensive.

Late in the evening on November 29, 1941 Zjukov had been informed, that the Supreme Command made a decision about the start of the counteroffensive, and proposes to introduce Zjukov's plan of the counteroffensive.

In the morning on November 30, 1941, Zjukov introduced to the Supreme Command in a graphical form (in a map) the Military Council's of the Western Front plan of the counteroffensive. Details of the plan had not been required since the main items of it had been preliminarily considered with J.V. Stalin, B.M. Shaposhnikov and A.M. Vasilevskiy.

In the note, which accompanied the Map-Plan of the counteroffensive, Zjukov indicated that there is not going to be any simultaneous offensive of all armies of the Western Front. The tasks of the counteroffensive had been formulated as follows:

- *The nearest task: by a blow to Klin, Solnechnogorsk and in the Istrinsk direction to crash the enemy on the right wing of the Front, and by a blow to Uzlovaya and Bogoroditsk into the flank and rear of Guderian Tank Group to crash the enemy on the left wing of the Western Front.*
- *In order to bound the enemy's forces on the rest of the front and deprive him the possibility of transferring troops, the 5th, 33rd, 43rd and 50th armies of the Western Front on December 4 -5 turn into offensive with limited tasks.*
- *The main airforce group (75%) will be directed for interaction with the right group of the army under General Golikov's command, the rest - to interact with the left group of his army.*

On that plan Stalin shortly wrote "Agree" and signed it.

14

To His Excellency Mr. Iosif Stalin

Dear Prime Minister Stalin,

The British and American Missions already left, and this letter will be transferred to You by Lord Biverbrook. Lord Biverbrook has complete trust of the Government, and is one of my oldest and closest friends. He established the tightest relationships with Mr. Harriman, who is a remarkable American, dedicated with his whole heart to the victory of (our) common cause. He will introduce to You everything we managed to work out as a result of very meticulous consultations between Great Britain and the United States.

President Roosevelt decided that our proposals must first of all relate to monthly quotas of materials, which we will send to You during a nine months period from October 1941 to June 1942 inclusive. You have the right to know exactly, what we can send monthly so that You would be able to distribute Your reserves most rationally.

The American propositions so far are limited with the end of June 1942, but I don't have any doubts that later both countries would be able to supply a much larger quantity, and You may be assured, that we would make all efforts to compensate, as much as possible, the heavy losses inflicted on Your military industry as a result of the Nazi invasion. I do not want to anticipate what Lord Biverbrook will have to say regarding this item.

You will see that until the end of June 1942 the deliveries are coming completely from the British production, or the production, which the United States will provide for us as our own purchases, or in correspondence with the lend-lease law. The United States have been ready to provide to us, factually, all their export surpluses. And it is not easy for them to provide, during that time, new sources of supply. I hope that the production of the United States will receive a further significant impulse, and that by 1943 the powerful industry of America will completely unfold in correspondence with the requirements of the war. Regarding our participation, we not only will significantly increase our contribution from our existing pre-planned production, but also will try to get from our people further efforts for the satisfaction of our common requirements. You,

however, would agree that our army and its supply, which had been planned, introduce, may be one fifth or one sixth of that of Your or the German armies. Our first obligation and requirement is to keep the seas open, and our second obligation - to achieve a decisive superiority in the air.

Those are the main requirements being presented to the human resources, which contain on the British islands 44,000,000 (men). We never can hope to have an army or a military industry, which could be compared with the army or the military industry of large continental military countries. In spite of that we will do everything possible to help You.

General Ismay, who is my personal representative in the Committee of the Commanders of Headquarters and who is totally aware about our entire military policy, is authorized to study with Your commanders any plans of practical cooperation, which could come to mind.

If we will be able to clean up from the enemy our Western flank in Libya, we will have significant forces, air as well as land, for joint actions on the Southern flank of the Russian Front.

It seems to me that, if it would be possible to impel Turkey to resist to the German requirements about letting pass troops, or even better than that, should Turkey enter the war on our side, this would be the fastest and most effective help to us. I am sure, that You will give to that matter an appropriate meaning.

I always shared Your sympathies to the Chinese people in their struggle of defending their motherland from the Japanese aggression. Of course, we do not want to add Japan to the number of our enemies, but the position of the United States, as it became clear from my meeting with President Roosevelt, already forced the Government of Japan to apply to more sober policies. I rushed to declare that, if the United States will be dragged into a war with Japan, Great Britain will immediately enter on their side. I think, that our three countries should, as much as possible, to render help to China, and that this help can be large enough without declaring war on the side of Japan.

There is no doubt that our peoples have a long period of struggle and sufferings ahead of them, but I have great hopes that the United States will enter the war as a fighting side, and if so, I am sure, that we would only have to show endurance to be victorious.

I hope, that during the course of the war huge masses of the peoples of the Britain Empire, the Soviet Union, the United States and China, who together total two thirds of the entire humanity, will come forward against their enemies, and I am sure that the way they will go will lead to victory.

I am sending sincere wishes of success to the Russian armies and annihilation of Nazi tyrants

Believe me,

Sincerely Yours,

Winston CHURCHILL

21 September 1941.

XVII. Frozen corpses...

... From time to time, I still was running through the former Red Army house. There had been cooped up people, whose apartment buildings or houses had been destroyed by Nazi bombing, and who could not find a better place to stay.

Some of the rooms in the Red Army house had been occupied by those people, other rooms had been empty. Before the war, all those rooms had been heated by a central heating system with water batteries. It was no stoves or furnaces in those rooms. The wooden floors in some of those rooms had already been striped of the wood. When a door into a room would be open, I would look into it, hoping to find something what could be burned...

... That severely cold morning, I went through the Red Army building. I was approaching a room, the door of which was suspiciously set ajar. I decided to take a look what is inside of that room.

What I saw the next moment was shocking and horrifying...

Six corpses of human, lying on the floor fully dressed. There were no beds or mattresses underneath of those bodies - just some dusty rags, pieces of old cloth, which had been collected from ruined buildings, or elsewhere...

... The corpses had been laying in strange positions - some close to each other. And it looked like, before they were frozen to death, they tried to warm up each other...

... I was so shocked with what I saw, that I was petrified for a few moments. I could not tear off my eyes from the corpses, and I could not move... Most of them - with eyes open, and expressions of torment/sufferings on their faces before their final moments, sufferings, which they could not overcome...

Defeat of the Nazis in the Moscow Counteroffensive – result of the combination of Zjukov's foresight and wisdom with sharpness and uncompromising will to goal achievement

Elsewhere in the world the Plan for counteroffensive of the Western Front had been approved by Stalin, now it was time for actions. Late in the evening on December 4, 1941 the Supreme Commander Stalin called Army General Zjukov and asked him:

- *What kind of help could be provided to the Western Front in addition of what had already been given?*

Zjukov responded that it is necessary to get airforce support from the Reserve of the Supreme Command and the Anti-Aircraft Defense of the USSR. He, again, asked for at least 200 tanks: without those tanks the Western Front would not be able to quickly develop the counteroffensive.

- *At the moment there are no tanks, we can not give you, - again, as in their previous conversation, said Stalin. - Aviation will be provided. Get an agreement with the General Headquarters. I am going to call them now. We gave a directive the Kalinin Front to start the offensive on December 5, and the Operational Group of the right wing of the South-Western Front to start the offensive on December 6, 1941 in the Elets area.*

The General Headquarters defined more precisely:

- *To facilitate the counteroffensive of the Western Front, the troops of the Kalinin Front are getting involved. Their task is to conduct a blow in the Southern-Western direction and to appear in the rear of the Klin-Solnechnogorsk group of the enemy facilitating the annihilation of that group by the Western Front forces.*

Inflicting a blow to the Elets group of the enemy by the Southern-Western Front was supposed to help the Western Front to annihilate the enemy's troops to the South-West of Moscow.

The deep snow, which fell in the first days of December, slightly worsened the concentration, regrouping and going out into the initial areas of the Soviet troops for the operation being prepared. However, those difficulties had been overcome, and all kind of troops had been ready for the counteroffensive to the morning of December 6.

In the morning on December 6, 1941 the troops of the Western Front started the counteroffensive southern and northern of Moscow. Near Kalinin and Elets moved ahead the neighboring fronts. A huge battle unfolded.

On the first day of the offensive the troops of the Kalinin Front indented into the front border of the enemy, however had not be able to overturn him. Only after a 10-days long battle and change in the tactics of the offensive the troops started to advance ahead. That

happened after the right wing of the Western Front crashed the Germans groups in the area Rogachevo-Solnechnogorsk and went around Klin.

On December 13, 1941 the 30th Army under the command of General D.D. Lelyushenko, and a portion of forces of the First Blow Army of the Western Front came close to Klin. Embracing the city from all sides, the Soviet troops burst into it, and after fierce fights during the night of December 15 cleaned up Klin from the enemy.

Successfully developed the offensive actions the 20th and the 16th Armies. To the end of December 9, the 20th Army overcame the desperate resistance of the enemy, approached Solnechnogorsk, and on December 12 kicked out the enemy from the city.

On December 8 the 16th Army liberated Kryukovo and continued the offensive to the Istrinsk Reservoir.

The troops of the 5th Army (right wing of the Western Front) under General Govorov's command advanced as well. The advancement of that army largely contributed to the success of the 16th Army.

After liberation of Klin, the Foreign Minister of Great Britain A. Iden visited that city. Late in December the newspaper "Pravda" published his impressions about that visit: "I was happy to see some of the exploits of the Russian Armies, exploits truly magnificent".

The counteroffensive actions on the right wing of the Western Front continued without an interruption. Those actions had been actively supported by the air crafts of the Western Front, the aviation of the Anti-Air crafts Defense of the USSR, and the aviation of remote action under the command of General A.E. Golovanov. The aviation had been inflicting powerful blows on artillery positions, tank groups, and command posts. Then, when Hitler's troops started to retreat, that aviation stormed and bombed the infantry, armor-tanks and auto transport columns. As a result all the roads to the West after the enemy's retreat had been jammed with demolished combat equipment and trucks and cars.

The Command of the Western Front had been sending into the rear of the enemy ski formations, cavalry and air-landing forces, which had been destroying the retreating enemy. Partisans unfolded the fight with the enemy, coordinating their actions with the Military councils of the fronts. Their actions seriously affected the situation for the Nazis.

On the left wing of the Western Front the forces of the 50th Army and the cavalry corps under command of General P.A. Belov on December 3, 1941 began to crash the 2nd Tank Army of Guderian in the Tula region. The 3rd, 17th Tank and the 29th Motorized divisions of the Fascists army started in a hoary to retreat to Venyov, leaving on the battle field up to 70 tanks.

The 10th Army entered into the battle in December in the Mikhailov region, where the enemy tried to uphold the defense with the purpose to cover up the flank of his retreating

2nd Tank Army. On December 8 the rest of the 50th Army turned into offensive threading to cut off the enemy's passages from Venyov and Mikhailov.

The actions of the 10th and 50th Armies, and the blows of the cavalry corps of General P.A. Belov had been continually supported by the aviation of the Western Front and that of the Supreme Command.

Guderian's Tank Army, deeply embraced on the flanks and being unable to withstand the counteroffensive blows of the Western Front and the Operational Group of the Southern-Western Front, started to retreat in a hoary in the general direction to Uzlovaya, Bogoroditsk and further to Suhinichi, leaving behind heavy weaponry, trucks and cars, tanks and prime movers.

During the 10-days battle the forces of the Western Front inflicted a serious defeat the 2nd Tank Army of Guderian, and advanced ahead by 130 kilometers.

To the left of the Western Front was successfully advancing the recuperated Bryansk Front. With the arriving of the Soviet forces on the line Oreshki - Staritsa - Lama and Ruza Rivers - Maloyaroslavets - Tikhonova Pustyn' - Kaluga - Mosal'sk - Sukhinichi - Belev - Mtsensk - Novosil' ended the first stage of the counteroffensive of the Soviet forces near Moscow.

The threat to Tula had finally been liquidated. Here the main role in the counteroffensive played the tank division of General A.L. Getman and the cavalry corps of General P.A. Belov. The Mobile Operational Group of the 50th Army under the command of General V.S. Popov inflicted the decisive blow to the enemy during the liberation of Kaluga.

Hitler's armies, exhausted and worn out in battles, had experienced great losses, and under the pressure of the Soviet forces kept retreating to the West.

The success of the counteroffensive of the Soviet forces in December 1941 on the central strategic direction had a great effect. The blow groups of the "Center" Group Armies of the enemy experienced a huge defeat and retreated.

However, the enemy still was strong. In the central area of the Soviet strategic front the enemy rendered fierce resistance. The military operations of the Soviet forces near Rostov and Tihvin, which started successfully, had not been completed correspondingly, and took a protracted character.

In the battles for Moscow the German-Fascists troops lost more than 500,000 men, 1,300 tanks, 2500 guns and more than 15,000 of other combat and transportation equipment. The enemy had been thrown away to the West from Moscow by 150 - 300 kilometers.

In those battles General Zjukov's stile had been brightly demonstrated. Zjukov combined foresight and wisdom with sharpness, uncompromising will to goal achievement with

flexibility, the ability to sacrifice the secondary in the name of the major, rigidity and even cruelty in the name of the victory over the enemy.

Stalin finally understood that Zjukov possesses outstanding military talents. From now and on said Zjukov "Stalin related to me very well, and frequently asked for my advice on principal subjects. It seemed to me, that Stalin sincerely wanted to iron out his guilt for his unjust relation to me and his coarseness, which he was allowing himself at the start of the war".

15

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

I would like very much to finally establish our alliance with Iran and to achieve tight, effective, practical cooperation with Your armed forces in Iran. There are signs in Iran of serious disorders between tribes and sharp reduction of the authority of the Government. Spread of such disorders would mean that we would be forced to waste our troops to come down of those people. And that, in turn, would mean loading the auto highways and railroads with transportation of the same troops and their supplies, while it is necessary for us to free the way and to improve it as much as possible to secure transportation of supplies into Your country. We should try to force the Iranians to keep themselves order in their country while we are busy conducting the war. A decisive instruction from Your Government will accelerate the already positive development of our efforts in that secondary theater of war.

1 October 1941

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XVIII. Life goes on...

... One of the apartments in our building had been occupied by a woman with her daughter - a beautiful girl. The daughter was, probably, in her early twenties. They were always friendly to me, and we frequently exchanged little favors.

Some times, I helped them to split wood for their stove, or was bringing them water from the well. They would thank me with a piece of bread, or a baked potato, or a few matches.

Some times, when I ran out of matches, I would come to their door and would ask if I could borrow a few matches from them...

... A couple times, during my visits to them, I saw a Romanian officer, sitting on the bed near the young lady and communicating with her in the absence of her mother. The officer was, probably, in his late twenties, and had a pleasant look...

During daytime their entrance door was usually unlocked. The entrance door would open into a little hall, from which another door would open into their kitchen/dining room. This was the warmest room in their flat, where they kept their beds and slept.

... That time, I ran out of matches, and decided to borrow a few of them from my friendly neighbors. I opened the entrance door, and went through the little hall to the kitchen door. I knocked softly a couple times into that door, but nobody answered. Since I knew, that somebody is at home (otherwise the entrance door would be locked), I opened the kitchen door as I did it a few times in the past (with the permission of my neighbors).

The scene, which I observed, was strange for me. The young lady was laying in bed with her long beautiful legs naked and spread out.

On top of her was the Romanian officer (partially naked). Both of them had been loudly moaning (and moving back and forward). They did not pay any attention to my appearance. They, probably, did not notice when I came in.

I did not understand what is going on. That was my first encounter with such an event. But, I understood that something primary is happening. Their moaning was becoming increasingly louder... I understood, that now is no time for matches, and left...

Stalin's concept and results of a general offensive along the entire front

Elsewhere in the world, on January 5, 1942 Army General G.K. Zjukov (as a member of the Supreme Command) had been called to a meeting of the Supreme Command for consideration of the Plan of the general offensive of the Soviet Army.

After B.M. Shaposhnikov's information about the situation on all fronts and his introduction of the projected plan, Stalin said:

- *The Germans are confused because of their defeat near Moscow. They are poorly prepared for the winter. Now is the most appropriate moment for turning to the general offensive. The enemy hopes to uphold our offensive until spring, when they would be able, to accumulate fresh forces and to turn to active motion. The enemy wants to win time and to get a respite.*

Nobody disagreed with that statement, and Stalin continued to develop his concept:

- *Our task therefore, - he continued, walking as usually along his office, - is not to let the Germans to take that respite, to drive them to the West without a stop, to force them to use up their reserves before the spring...*

Stalin made an accent on the words "before the spring", stopped for a moment and then explained:

- *When we will have new reserves and the Germans would not have reserves anymore...*

The main concept of the Supreme Commander had been as follows. Taking into account the success of the counteroffensive of the Western Front, to establish as a goal the demolition of the enemy on all fronts.

The main blow was planed to inflict on the enemy's Center Group of armies. It was assumed that the demolition of that Group would be achieved by the joined forces of the Northern-Western, Kalininsk and Western fronts with a two-sided embrace, surrounding and annihilation of their main forces in the region of Rzjev, Vyas'ma and Smolensk.

The armies of the Leningrad, Volhov and left wing of the Northern-Western Fronts had a task to demolish the Group of Armies "North".

The armies of the Southern-Western and Southern Fronts were supposed to inflict the defeat on the enemy's Group of armies "South" and to liberate Donbass, and the Caucasian Front and the Blacksea fleet - to liberate Crimea.

Transition to general offensive had been assumed to be done in extremely short times.

After introduction of that project Stalin proposed to the members of the meeting to comment. G.K. Zjukov reported:

- *On the Western direction, where more favorable conditions had been generated and the enemy had not yet managed to rebuild the combat ability of its units, it is necessary to continue the offensive. However, for the successful result of that it is necessary to get reinforcement in human resources, combat equipment, and to enforce with reserves, first of all - with tanks. If we will not receive that reinforcement, the offensive can not be successful.
Regarding the offensive of our forces in the Leningrad region and in the South-Western direction, those forces are facing a very strong defense of the enemy. Without powerful artillery means they will not be able to break up the enemy's defense, will exhaust themselves and will experience great absolutely unjustified losses. I propose to enforce the fronts of the Western direction, and to conduct here a more powerful offensive.*

-Now we do not possess material means, which would be sufficient for providing a simultaneous offensive of all fronts,- said N.A. Voznesenskiy in support of Zjukov's proposal.

-I talked to Timoshenko,- Stalin said. - He thinks that we must act also in the South-Western direction. It is necessary as quickly as possible to grind the Germans so that they would not be able to offend in the spring. Who else wants to comment?

There was no response to that question. Consideration of the Propositions of the Supreme Commander, therefore, did not materialize.

On January 7, 1942 the Headquarters of the Western Front received the Directive regarding the offensive. In order to execute that Directive, the Military Council of the Front commanded to the Front's forces the following additional tasks for the continuation of the offensive:

- the right wing of the Front (1st Blow, 20th and 16th armies) to continue the offensive in the general direction to Sychovka, and in cooperation with Kalininsk Front to demolish the enemy's Sychovka-Rzjev Group of forces;*
- the center of the Front (5th and 33rd Armies) to offense in the general direction Mozjaysk-Gzjatsk; 43rd, 49th and 50th Armies to inflict a blow in the direction to Yuhnov, to demolish the Yuhnov-Kondrovsk Group of the enemy and to develop the blow to Vyaz'ma;*
- the enforced Cavalry Corps under General P.A. Belov's command to proceed into the Vyaz'ma region to join with the Cavalry Corps of General S.V. Sokolov, acting within the Kalininsk Front, to jointly conduct a blow to Vyaz'ma's Group of forces of the enemy;*
- 10th Army to offense to Kirov and to cover up the left wing of the Front.*

Northern-Western Front was supposed to conduct the offensive in two divergent directions. 3rd Army of that front under General M.A. Purkaev's command conducted the offensive in the general direction to Velikie Luki; 4th Blow Army under General A.I. Eremenko's command unfolded the offensive to Toropets-Velizj

The armies of the right wing of the Southern-Western Front had a task to bind the withstanding enemy and not to let him to relocate his forcer to the central direction and to Donbass.

The forces of Southern-Western direction had a task to liberate Har'kov and to capture bridgeheads in the regions of Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozj'e.

The Plan was huge. Unfortunately, in a number of directions, including the main Western direction, that plan had not been provided with sufficient forces and means. Stalin was well aware of that fact.

According to G.K. Zjukov, the offensive of the Soviet forces near Moscow at the beginning of 1942 had been going as follows.

On January 10, 1942 the forces of the Western Front (20th Army, part forces of the 1st Blow Army, 2nd Guardian Cavalry Corps of General I.A. Pliev, 22 Tank Brigade and five ski battalions) after 1.5 hours of artillery preparation started the offensive with the purpose to crash the enemy's front in the region of Volokolamsk. As a result of two-day persistent combats the enemy's defense had been broken.

Into the break had been thrown the Cavalry Corps of General I.A. Pliev, the five ski battalions and the 22nd Tank Brigade.

On January 16 and 17, 1942 the forces of the right wing of the Western Front with the help of partisan units captured Lotoshino, Shahovskaya, and cut off the railroad Moscow-Rzjev. It would seem logically to increase forces in that region in order to develop success. However it turned to be differently.

On January 19, 1942 Zjukov received from Stalin an order to withdraw from the battle the 1st Blow Army into the Reserve of the Supreme Command. G.K. Zjukov and V.D. Sokolowskiy addressed the General Headquarters with a request to leave the 1st Blow Army on the Western Front. The only answer was - that is the order of the Supreme Commander.

Zjukov called Stalin personally, and explained that the withdraw of that army would lead to the weakening of the Blow Group. Stalin's answer was:

- *Withdraw without any considerations! You have a lot of troops, count how many armies you have.*

Zjukov tried to object:

- *Comrade Supreme Commander, our Front is very wide; on all directions are now going on severe combats, which exclude the possibility of regrouping. I am asking for the permission not to withdraw the 1st Army from the contingent of the right wing of the Western Front until the completion of the already started offensive, and not to reduce the pressure on the enemy in that region.*

Instead of an answer, Stalin dropped the telephone. Negotiations with B.M. Shaposhnikov did not produce any positive result as well.

-My dear,- said B.M. Shaposhnikov,- I can not do anything; that is the personal decision of the Supreme Commander.

Zjukov had been forced to stretch on a wide front the forces of the 20th Army. The weakened forces of the right wing of the Western Front, when approached to Gjatsk, had been stopped by the offense of the enemy, and could not advance any further.

By January 20, 1942 the 5th and the 33rd Armies, which conducted the offensive at the center of the Western Front, liberated Ruza, Dorohovo, Mojaysk, and Vereya. The 43rd and the 49th armies advanced into the region of Domanov, and engaged into a combat with the Yuhnov Group of the enemy...

In February and March 1942 the Supreme Command Headquarters requested to enforce the actions in the Western direction. However, the Western and other fronts by that time exhausted their forces and resources.

In general, G.K. Zjukov witnessed, at that time the resources of the USSR had been critically limited. The needs of the troops could not yet be satisfied in accordance with the tasks and the combat situations. "The situation was so bad,- said Zjukov,- that every time, when we had been called to the Supreme Command Headquarters we had been begging the Supreme Commander anti-tank rifles, automatic rifles, 10 -15 anti-tank guns, minimum required quantity of shells and mines. Everything, what we manage to receive in such a way, would be immediately loaded on trucks and sent to the armies most in need.

Especially bad was the situation with ammunition. For instance, in comparison to the amount of ammunition, planned for our Western Front for the first decade of January 1942, only the following quantities had been supplied: 82-mm mines - 1.0%; artillery shots - 20 - 30%. In general during January 50-mm mines - 2.7%; 120-mm mines - 36%; 82-mm mines - 55%; artillery shots - 44%. The plan for February 1942 had not been fulfilled at all. Out of 316 railroad wagons of ammunition, planned for the 1st decade of February, nothing had been delivered. Because of lack of ammunition for the jet artillery, we had been forced to partially transfer it to the rear.

It is, probably, hard to believe that we had been forced to ration the spending...of the ammunition - 1 -2 shots per gun per day! And that, notice, during the offensive!

In the Report dated February 14, 1942 of the Western Front addressed to the Supreme Commander, had been stated:

- As the experience of the battles showed, lack of shells does not allow conducting artillery offensive. As a result, the artillery system of the enemy is not being destroyed, and our troops, attacking a slightly depressed defense of the enemy, experience great losses without achieving corresponding success.

At the end of February-beginning of March 1942 the Supreme Command took a decision to enforce with troops and combat means the fronts, which acted in the Western Direction. However, that had already been a belated decision. The enemy, worrying about the development of events, had significantly enforced its Vyasemsk Group, and based on previously enforced positions, started active motions against the forces of the Western and Kalininsk Fronts".

It was becoming increasingly harder for the overtired and weakened soviet troops to overcome the resistance of the enemy. Zjukov's repeated reports and proposals to the Supreme Command about the necessity to stop and to fasten on the achieved frontiers had been rejected by the Supreme Command. On the contrary, in the Directive of March 1942 Stalin again requested to more forcefully continue the execution of the previously ordered task.

At the end of March-beginning of April 1942 the fronts of the Western direction had still been trying to execute that Directive, which required crashing the Rjev-Vyaz'ma Group of the enemy. However, those attempts appeared to be unsuccessful.

"Finally,- stated Zjukov,- the Supreme Command had been forced to accept our proposal about turning to defense on the line Velikie Luki - Velizj - Demidov - Beliy - Duhovschina - Dnepr River - Nelidovo - Rzjev - Pogoreloe Gorodische - Gjatsk - Ugra River - Spas-Demensk - Kirov - Lyudinovo - Holmische - Oka River.

During the period of the winter offensive the forces of the Western Front advanced by only 70 - 100 kilometers, however they improved somewhat the general operational-strategic situation on the Western direction".

What are the general results of the great battle for Moscow? The German general Westfal, in his description of the operation "Typhoon"(the code title of the Germans' offensive on Moscow) was forced to witness: "the German Army, which before had been considered invincible, appeared on the brink of annihilation". Other Hitler's generals had made similar statements.

G.K. Zjukov witnessed: "The counteroffensive in the winter of 1941/1942 had been conducted in a complex situation with the main factor being the lack of quantitative superiority over the enemy. In addition, we did not have in the possession of the fronts tanks of full value and motorized formations. As the practice of war showed, without them it is impossible to successfully conduct offensive operations with far reaching goals. To prevent the maneuver of the enemy, to quickly surpass his flanks, to cut off the rear roads, to surround and to split the enemy's groups is possible only with the help of powerful tank and motorized formations".

"I am frequently being asked,- wrote G.K. Zjukov,- what had been Stalin's role during the battle for Moscow. J.V. Stalin was all that time in Moscow, organizing forces and means for the defeat of the enemy. It is necessary to give him his due. Being the Head of the State Committee of Defense and based on the Managerial Staff of all Ministries, he accomplished a colossal work on generation of required strategic reserves and material-technical means for providing the counteroffensive near Moscow. With his rigid demanding, he was achieving, one may say, the almost impossible".

16

I. V. Stalin to W. Churchill

Dear Prime Minister Churchill,

The arrival in Moscow of the British and American Missions and particularly the guidance of those missions by Lord Biverbrook and Mr. Harriman had a very favorable significance. With regard to Lord Biverbrook, he really did everything so that the consideration, and where possible, the decision right here in Moscow of the most urgent problems, discussed on the Moscow Conference of the three countries, would happen quickly and effectively. I must say the same about Mr. Harriman. For all of that I am expressing to You and to Mr. Roosevelt, who sent to Moscow such authoritative representatives, the sincere gratitude of the Soviet Government.

I will not hide from You, that our current needs of military supply, in view of a number of unfavorable conditions on our front and, consequently, forced evacuation of a new group of plants are not exhausted by the decisions, achieved at the Conference, not even to mention the fact that the decision of a number of problems had been postponed for the final consideration and decision to be made in London and Washington. But the job performed at the Moscow Conference is spacious and significant. I hope that the British and American Governments will do everything possible to increase in the future the monthly quotas, and also currently at the slightest possibility to accelerate the already planned deliveries because the Nazis will use the pre-winter months for maximum pressure on the USSR.

Regarding Turkey, as with regard to China, I agree with the considerations, which You expressed. I hope that the British Government is conducting the required activity in both directions, which is particularly important now, when corresponding possibilities of the USSR, naturally, are limited.

Regarding the perspectives of our common cause of the struggle against Hitler's gang of robbers, settled in the center of Europe, I also express assuredness, that in spite of all the difficulties, we will decide the cause of destruction of Hitler in the interests of our freedom-loving peoples.

With sincere respect

I. STALIN

3 October 1941

XIX. My hospital

... A very cold severe winter raged over Mogilyov... I - the only "man" in the household - was climbing over the ruins of the buildings demolished by Nazi bombing, dragging out pieces of wooden beams, floors, window frames and doors.

That was deadly dangerous - every moment could collapse (and frequently did collapse!) - the hanging-up ruins... But I would not give-up. Wood hunting became my mania...

... Typhus raged over Mogilyov in addition to the severe winter. First became sick my older cousin, then - the younger-one, then my aunt with her one-year-old baby. They all slept in the same bed under the same blanket.

Finally, my grandmother became sick. But she remained in clear mind, and guided my actions.

No medical help or medical supply was available to us...

The only our food at that time was mamalyga. I cooked it in an iron pot on an iron stove from corn flour and water. A couple sacks of that flour we got in the fall in exchange for cloth...

... I remained healthy, or at least mobile, for a long period of time. That was a miracle. All my days had been identical. I had to get up in the dark early in the morning, so that I would not come across the Nazis, or Ukrainian gendarmes, and would go to search for wood.

After returning with what I managed to find and to pull over the snow, I would chop it into small pieces, and would start the fire in the iron stove.

I would give to everybody (who could move) in my "hospital" the lavatory and water to wash their hands and faces. I would break the ice in the bucket, melt it and warm up on the iron stove together with some water so that my "patients" would not burn their hands and faces with the icy-cold water.

Then, I would cook the mamalyga and feed my "hospital". After that, I would bring water in the bucket from the water pump so that I would have enough of it for boiling and for the next morning.

Then, deadly-tired, I would lie down on my "bed" - a desk leaned against the wall on one side, and on the other side - against the head of the bed, where my aunt laid with her three children - all typhus-infected. And I - the nurse - was not yet even eight years old...

The situation on the Soviet – German Front and preparedness of both sides

Elsewhere in the world, between the USSR on one side and USA and Great Britain on the other side had been reached an agreement concerning the opening of the Second Front in Europe in 1942. On the Soviet-German front both sides turned to defense. After completion of the general winter offensive, the Soviet Military Forces still had been much weaker in manpower, quality of weaponry and other combat equipment than the German army. At that time the USSR did not have ready to be employed reserves and large material resources. The success of the soviet industries, producing tanks and artillery, allowed the Supreme Command to start the formation of tank corps and tank armies, providing them with the most modern at that time material supply.

The Soviet troops had been receiving modernized 45-mm anti-tank guns, new 76-mm guns. It was going on the formation of new artillery units and formations. Large organizing efforts had been undertaken in the area of the anti-air craft defense of the troops and the country in general. The military air- craft forces started the formation of air- craft armies. By June 1942 the Soviet Army already had 8 airforce armies. To a significant extend started to get reinforcement the long distance military airforce. The total manpower of the Acting Soviet Army had been increased to 5.6 million people, the number of tanks reached 3,882, guns and mortars - 44.9 thousands (without the 50-mm mortars, which amounted to 21,400 pieces), combat air crafts - 2,221. The troops had been involved in combat preparation, the combat experience and the new weaponry had been scrupulously studied.

The Germans had been involved in preparation to the summer military campaign as well. The Fascists Germany and its allies have had on the fronts from Barents Sea to Black Sea 217 divisions and 20 brigades out of which 178 divisions, 8 brigades and 4 military air-craft fleets had been from Germany. On other fronts and in the occupied countries, because of the absence of the Second Front, Germany kept no more than 20% of its military forces.

By May 1942 the enemy had on the Soviet-German front more than a 6,000,000 men strong army, 3,229 tanks and storming guns, up to 57,000 guns and mortars, 3,395 combat air crafts. In manpower the enemy still had superiority. The Soviet Army had some superiority in the number of tanks. However, qualitatively a large portion of the Soviet tank parks had still been of lower level than that of the Germans tanks.

The political and military strategy of Hitler's Supreme Command on the nearest period of 1942 had been to demolish the Soviet troops in the South, to capture the Caucasus

region, to advance to Volga River, to capture Stalingrad and Astrakhan', and, in such a way, to generate conditions for annihilation of the USSR as a state.

After completion a series of undertakings, Hitler's High Command well enforced the "South" Group of their armies, and concentrated in that group forces, significantly superior to the Soviet troops of the Southern-Western direction.

In Hitler's Directive of April 5, 1942 had been foreseen separation of the wealthiest industrial and agricultural regions from the Soviet Union, obtainment of additional economical resources (first of all the Caucasian oil fields), and possess a leading strategic position for achieving their military-political goals.

Planning the capture of the Caucasus and Volga River, the German Command wanted to cut off the Southern communications with the USSR's allies of the anti-Hitler's coalition.

According to Zjukov: "... I knew well Stalin's evaluation of the spring 1942 situation and the perspectives of the war in 1942. It was obvious that the Supreme Commander does not completely trust the promises made by Churchill and Roosevelt with regard to the opening of the Second Front in Europe, but does not loose hope, that they would make an attempt to accomplish something in other regions. Stalin trusted more Roosevelt and less Churchill".

17

Personal Message from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Stalin

I was glad to find out from lord Biverbrook about the success of the tri-state Conference which took place in Moscow... We intend to secure an uninterrupted cycle of convoys, which will live with a ten-day cycle. The following shipments are already on their way and will arrive in Arhangel'sk on 12 October: 20 heavy tanks, 193 airplanes- fighters (of the pre-October quota). The next shipments will leave on 12 October and intend to be delivered on the 29th (October): 140 heavy tanks, 100 airplanes "Hurricane" type, 200 transporters for machine-guns "Bran" type, 200 anti-tank riffles with ammunition, 50 42mm-guns with shells. Next shipments are to be sent on the 22nd (October): 200 airplanes-fighters, 120 heavy tanks. In other words, the entire October quota of airplanes and 280 tanks will arrive in Russia by 6 November. The October quota of transporters for Machine-guns type "Bran", anti-tank riffles and guns of 42mm caliber for tanks will arrive in October. 20 tanks had been loaded for transportation through Iran and 15 (tanks) will be immediately shipped from Canada through Vladivostok.

I.e. the total number of tanks shipped is 315, i.e. less by 19 units of our full quota.. This number will be replenished in November. The aforementioned program does not include the deliveries from the United States.

Organizing this regular cycle of convoys, we assume that Arhangel'sk will accept the main part of the shipments. I assume that this part of work is already being conducted.

6 October 1941

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XX. The madness of typhus

... I remained healthy (or at least mobile) for a long period of time. That was a miracle. It was highly unlikely that without this miracle my "hospital" (and later myself) would survive...

There was no even mentioning about medical help, or medicine available to us. Even thinking of it was unreal. Even, if I would know a place, where, I, assumingly, could get some medicine for my "hospital" for free, it would be unlikely that I would take a risk to go to that place because of fear to be infected by a more severe illness, not even to mention the deadly danger of encounter with the Nazis or gendarmes...

... Fear was always in my mind. The world outside of the walls of our shelter was full of horror, deadly danger and fear. Fear was also inside those walls...

I already knew that typhus is a deadly disease. Right on the floor in the corridors of the Red Army building, through which I passed from time to time, had been laying corpses of people, who died of typhus, starvation, or simply frozen to death.

... Typhus affected my "patients" in different ways. My cousins and grandmother went "peacefully" through the illness. Most of the time they maintained a clear mind. My aunt, on the opposite, most of the time had high fever during the illness. She often was loosing her mind. At such moments, she was becoming violent and dangerous for us, especially for me.

At such moments, when she would be sitting on the lavatory, and I would stand near her bed, she would put one of her hands on my head for support. Suddenly, she would grab my hair and start to pull them, or to violently shake my head...

Another time, feeding the baby, she became wild, and was on the edge of destroying him. It took my cousins and myself heroic efforts to separate her from the baby... From that time and on during her illness I would always stand by during baby-feeding with a pot of icy-cold water...

... She would become violent almost always suddenly. At such moments, she would call me, and when I was approaching her bed, she would grab and throw into me whatever

was on the little table near her bed, or nearly - a soup vase with ice, which I used to make a cold compress for her head, a dish with a piece of mamalyga, a night bowl...

A few times she was "successful", and I got injured. I quickly learned to evade from those identified "flying objects", as I learned to evade from falling ruins of buildings, destroyed by Nazi bombing, during my hunting for wood...

Zjukov's disagreement with proposed by Stalin offensive operations for the summer of 1942

...Elsewhere in the world the Soviet Supreme Command was intensively involved in development of plans for military actions for the spring and summer of 1942. According to G.K. Zjukov, Stalin assumed, that at that time the USSR did not yet possess sufficient forces and resources for unfolding large offensive operations. He considered that for the nearest future it was necessary to limit the military actions with an active strategic defense. However, simultaneously Stalin considered as a necessity to conduct a number of offensive operations in Crimea, in the Har'kov region, in L'gov-Kursk and Smolensk directions, and also in the regions of Leningrad and Demyansk.

According to Zjukov, Stalin had been assuming that during the summer 1942 the Germans would be able to conduct large offensive operations simultaneously in two strategic directions, most probably - in the Moscow direction and in the South of the country.

Out of the two directions, where (according to Stalin's assumption) the Germans could start their strategic offensive operations, Stalin mostly worried about the Moscow direction, where the Germans have had more than 70 divisions.

"I had been in basic agreement with Stalin's operational-strategic prognostications, - Zjukov wrote. - However, I could not agree with him in respect of the number of proposed frontal operations of our forces, assuming that they would swallow our Reserves without any usefulness for us, and in such a way, the preparation to the following offensive of the Soviet forces would become complicated.

Reporting my argumentation, I was proposing to Stalin and to the General Headquarters first of all to inflict powerful blows in the Western Strategic direction with the purpose of demolition of the Vyaz'ma-Rjev Group of the enemy. Those blows had been supposed to be conducted by the forces of the Western, Kalininsk and nearby fronts, and also by the air force of the Supreme Command and the Anti-Air Craft Offensive Forces of Moscow.

The demolition of the enemy's forces in the Western direction was supposed to seriously weaken the German troops, and to force them to refuse from large offensive operations, at least for the nearest future.

Due to the complexity of the situation, Stalin ordered to give once again a detailed consideration of the general situation, and to analyze the possible versions of actions of the Soviet forces during the future summer campaign. It had been suggested to pay special attention to the proposals of the Command of the Southern-Western Front about conducting a large offensive operation involving the forces of the Bryansk, Southern-Western and Southern fronts. The purpose of that operation - defeat of the enemy on the Southern wing and advancement of the Soviet forces to the boundary Gomel' - Kiev - Chercassy - Pervomaysk - Nikolaev".

During the consideration of the plan of the offensive operation, introduced by the Command of the Southern-Western direction, Marshal Shaposhnikov expressed the disagreement of the General Headquarters with that plan, and tried to point out the difficulties in organizing that operation, the lack of reserves, which had been required there. However, Stalin, without letting him to finish, said:

-We should not sit without any motion and wait until the Germans would inflict a blow first! It is necessary to inflict a number of forestalling blows on a wide front, and to test the preparedness of the enemy. Zjukov proposes to unfold the offensive in the Western direction, and to conduct defense on the rest of the fronts. I think that this is a half-measure".

After that S.K. Timoshenko, the Commander of the Southern-Western Front, reported the situation there and said:

- The forces of this direction are now capable of, and, without any doubts, must inflict to the Germans in the Southern-Western direction a forestalling blow, and destroy their offensive plans against the Southern and Southern-Western fronts. Otherwise, it would be repeated the situation which happened at the start of the war. With regard to turning to offensive in the Western direction - I support Zjukov. This would bind the enemy's forces.

G.K. Zjukov, once again, reported his disagreement with unfolding a number of offensive operations simultaneously. However, that position had not been taken into consideration. A half-measure decision followed. On one hand Stalin agreed with the General Headquarters, which categorically disagreed against conducting a large offensive operation by a group of Soviet fronts near Har'kov. On the other hand, he gave a permission S.K. Timoshenko to conduct a particular operation by forces of the Southern-Western direction to defeat (from the Volchansk region) the Har'kov group of the enemy, to capture Har'kov and to generate conditions for the liberation of Donbass.

The events in May and June showed, that such a decision carried a huge and very costly mistake.

18

Personal Message from Winston Churchill to Mr. Stalin

Thank You for Your letter of 3 October.

I continuously followed for the accelerated shipments to Arhangel'sk, about which I informed You in my telegram of 6 October. Your request concerning 3000 trucks will be immediately satisfied from our army stocks, but (their) delivery must not interfere with the delivery of tanks and airplanes. We are asking Mr. Harriman to Take care about a larger program of supplies from the United States, calculated for a prolonged period.

Regarding Iran. Our interests there are just in the following: first is the creation of a barrier against the German penetration into the East and, secondly, establishing a thruout way for the delivery of shipments to the Caspian sea. If You wish to withdraw located there five or six Russian divisions to use them in the fighting front, we will take complete responsibility on the maintaining the order and maintaining in good shape and improvement of the roads of supply. I promise in the name of Britain that we will not attempt to receive any profits on the expense of justified Russian interests as during the war and after it as well. In any case, the undersigning of a three-sided agreement is urgently needed to avoid the increase of internal disorders, which would cause the danger of interruption of the shipment transportation over the roads of supply. General Wavell will be in Tbilisi on 16 October and will discuss with Your generals any problems, which You may wish to authorize them to decide with him.

It is impossible to express our feelings in words with regard to Your colossal heroic struggle - we hope to witness it soon by deeds.

12 October 1941

19

Received 12 October 1941

Personal Message from Prime Minister Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

In order to clarify the business and to compose plans for the future, I am ready to send General Wavell, the Supreme Commander in India, Iran and Iraq for a meeting with You in Moscow, Kuybyshev, Tbilisi or any other place of Your residence. In addition, General Pajet, our new Supreme Commander, assigned to the Far East, will arrive with General Wavell. General Pajet had been managing the business here, and he is familiar with the latest policies of our Supreme Command. Those two officers will be able to precisely describe to You our situation, our possibilities and what we consider to be rational. They can come to You approximately within two weeks. Do You want to meet with them?

We advised You in my message of 6 September that we are ready to declare war to Finland. I am asking You, however, to discuss the rationality of the declaration of war by

Great Britain to Finland, Hungary and Romania at the current moment. This would be a formality only because our wide blockade is already acting against them. My considerations speak against that because, first of all, Finland has many friends in the United States, and it would be rational to take into account that fact. Secondly, with regard to Romania and Hungary, those countries are full of our friends; Hitler depressed them and used them as a blind weapon. But if fortune would turn against that cutthroat, they would be too easy crossover again to our side. Declaration of war by Great Britain would push them away and create an impression that Hitler is the manager of a great European union, which stands together against us...

I hope that our shipments are being transported from Arhangel'sk with the same speed as they are being delivered. A small shipment flow begins also to move now through Iran. We will pump our deliveries in both ways, stressing to the limit our efforts. I am asking You to provide our technicians, who follow with the tanks and airplanes, with the opportunity to pass those armaments to Your people at the most favorable conditions. Currently our mission in Kuybyshev is separated from that business... We are sending those armaments with the risk for us, and we would greatly wish that it to be used in the best possible way. Possibly, Your instructions are needed.

I am not in the position to inform You about our nearest military plans more than You can inform us about Yours, however I want to assure You that we sit without any actions.

To keep Japan calm we are sending into the Indian Ocean our newest warship "Prince of Wells", which can catch up and destroy any Japanese ship... I insistently asked President Roosevelt to increase his pressure on the Japanese and to keep them in fear so that they would not block the Vladivostok path.

I will not waste words for compliments because You already know from Lord Biverbrook and Mr. Harriman what we think about Your struggle. Be sure in our tireless support.

I would be glad to receive directly from You an information that You received this telegram.

20

Sent 8 November 1941

Personal Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

I received Your message on 7 November.

1. I agree with You, that it is necessary to bring in clarity, which currently does not exist in the relationships between the USSR and Great Britain. This vagueness is a result of two circumstances: first - there is no definite agreement between our countries about the goals of war and the plans of organizing the business of peace after the war; and the second - there is no agreement between the USSR and Great Britain about military mutual help in Europe against Hitler. Until there is no agreement on those two main problems, not only there will be no clarity in the British-Soviet relationships, but, speaking absolutely sincerely, the mutual trust is not secured. Of course, the existing agreement between regarding the military supply to the Soviet Union has a great positive meaning, but it does not solve the

problem and is far from exhausting the business of interrelationships between our countries..

If General Wavell and General Pajet, who You mentioned in Your message, will come to Moscow to sign agreement on the aforementioned main problems, then, of course, I am ready to meet them and to consider those problems. If the mission of those generals is limited to informing and considering secondary problems, then I do not see a necessity to disturb the generals from their business and myself would not be able to allocate time for such conversations.

2. Regarding declaring war to Finland, Hungary and Romania by Britain it appeared, as it seems to me, an intolerable situation. The Soviet Government addressed that question to the Great Britain Government in a secretive diplomatic order. Unexpectedly for the USSR all that problem, starting with the address of the Soviet Government to the Great Britain Government and up to consideration of that problem by the USA Government, is brought to the press and is discussed in the press, friendly and hostile, at random. And after all of that the Government of Great Britain declares about its negative relation to our proposition. Why is being done? For the reason to demonstrate discord between the USSR and Great Britain indeed?
3. Please be assured, that we are taking all the measures so that the armaments, delivered from England to Arhangel'sk, to be on time transported to their destination. The same will be done with regard to Iran. It is, however worse to say, while it is a detail, that tanks, artillery and aviation are being delivered in poor wrapping, separate pieces of artillery are being delivered on different ships, and airplanes are so poorly wrapped up that we receive them in a broken state.

21

Received 22 November 1941

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

Thank You very much for Your message which I just received. At the very start of the war I entered into a personal correspondence with President Roosevelt, which led to the establishing between us of a fundamental mutual understanding, and oftenly helped to solve problems quickly. My only wish is the cooperation with You based the same conditions of friendship and trust.

About Finland: I was completely ready to advise the Cabinet to discuss the question of war declaration to Finland, when I sent to You the telegram on 5 September. As a result of information, received later, I came to an opinion, that it is possible to render more help to Russia and to our common cause, if it would be possible to get from Finland a cancellation of military actions and stop them on the spot, or send them home, rather than to put them on the bench of defendants together with the culprits - countries of the axle by formally declaring to them war and forcing them to fight to the end. However, if they will not stop the war during the nearest fifteen days and You will still desire our declaration of war, we will unavoidably do it. I agree with You that publicizing that matter was absolutely wrong. We are not to blame for that.

If our offensive in Libya will lead, as we hope, to the destruction of the German and Italian armies there, it will appear possible to conduct a wide consideration of the war as a whole with greater freedom, than that could be done by the Government of Her Majesty up to now.

For that purpose we are ready to send in the nearest future Mr. Iden - the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who You are familiar with. He will be heading through the Mediterranean sea for a meeting with You in Moscow or in another place. He will be accompanied by high-ranking military and other experts. He will be able to discuss any problem, regarding the war, including sending troops not only to Caucasus, but also to the front line of Your armies in the South. Neither our ship resources, nor our communications will allow to introduce into action significant forces, and even with that You will be forced to choose between troops and the deliveries through Iran.

I see, that You desire to discuss the after-war situation in the world. Our intention is to lead the war in unity and constant consultation with You at the maximum stress of our forces and no matter how long it would take. When the war will be won, which I am sure of, we expect that Soviet Russia, Great Britain and the USA will meet around the table of the conference of victory as the three major participants, and those by whose efforts nazism will be annihilated. Naturally, the first task will be to prevent Germany, and especially Prussia, to attack us the third time. The fact that Russia is a communist country and that Britain and USA are not such countries and do not have any intentions to become such, does not introduce any obstacle for us to compose a good plan for providing our mutual security and our legal interests. The Minister of Foreign Affairs would be able to discuss with You all those questions.

It is quite possible, that the defense of Moscow and Leningrad, as well as the glorious resistance to the invader on the entire Russian front, will inflict deadly wounds on the internal structure of the Nazi regime. But we must not count on such a highly happy outcome, but simply must to inflict on them blows as much as possible.

22

Sent 23 November 1941

Message of Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Thank You for the message.

The wish to cooperate with me through personal correspondence on the basis of concord and mutual trust, expressed in Your message, I am sincerely greeting, and hope that this will to a large degree assist the success of our common cause.

Regarding Finland, the USSR, at least for the initial period, did not proposed anything else, but cancellation of military actions and the exit of Finland from war. If Finland will not do at least that, then I consider the Great Britain's declaration of war with Finland expedient & necessary. Otherwise it could appear an impression, that on the problem of war against Hitler and his most dedicated co-participants we do not have unity, and the co-participants of Hitler's aggression can with unpunishment do their infamous business. With regard to Hungary & Romania, perhaps, it can wait.

Your proposition to send in the nearest future to the USSR Mr. Iden - the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I am totally supporting. Consideration with him and acceptance of an

agreement about united actions of the Soviet & English troops on our front and accomplishment of this undertaking in a fast order would have a great positive meaning. It is absolutely right, that the consideration & acceptance of a plan of the post-war of organization of the world must stem from the intention to prevent Germany and first of all Prussia to again break peace and to plunge again the peoples into a bloody massacre.

I agree with You also on the statement that the difference in the character of the state arrangement of the USSR, on one side, and Great Britain and the USA, on the other side, must not and can not prevent us from making positive decisions in providing our mutual security and legitimate interests. I hope that if in that area exist some reservations & doubts, they will be dispersed as a result of negotiations with Mr. Iden.

Please, accept my gratitude with regard to the successful start of the offensive of the British troops in Libya.

The struggle of the Soviet troops with Hitler's troops remains very stressful. But, in spite of all the difficulties, the resistance of our troops is growing and will be growing. Our will to victory over the enemy is firm.

The messages ## 23 - 37 exchanged between I. Stalin & W. Churchill during the period of 30 November 1941 and 21 March 1942 do not contain any significant information concerning any material/military help from Britain or the USA to USSR, and because of that are not presented here.

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XXI. Spring 1942: good and bad news...

... Finally, I became sick... Before that happened - I remember - my aunt started to recover and to get out of her bed. She was weak and thin as a rake, and could not move through our apartment without the support of the furniture or the walls...

This was, probably, the end of February, or the beginning of March, because in the day time the snow started to melt.

... When I became sick, I like fell into blackness, and remembered nothing... When I regained consciousness, the snow almost melted away.

... The Jewish population, which survived the horrible 1941 - 1942 winter, became bolder. More and more people could be seen in the streets and in the market place. Some

of them had even returned to their pre-war occupations of making or repairing cloth, shoes, making soap, baking bread and pastry, dyeing, furriery, especially for the Ukrainian population of the surrounding villages...

It seemed, that life started slowly to come back... One of the reasons for that was the fact that the persecutions of the Jewish population and atrocities slowed down because of the Nazi's fear to become infected with typhus and other diseases during the contact with their victims. Typhus was still raging over Mogilyov...

... After my recovery, during my time free of my daily duties, I would meet with a couple other boys of my age in the Red Square - a little park in the middle of Mogilyov, and a couple minutes away of our apartment.

Before the war, this was a very popular and pleasant place, especially in the spring and summer time. The park had a lot of old trees and bushes. It was very shady. It had a couple playgrounds for children. It was covered with many flowerbeds. It had a couple large fountains and statues in different places.

The park was separated from the streets by a low stone wall, the top of which was also a flowerbed.

... Now, the park looked more like a cemetery. And only we - a couple boys - revived the picture. Recently, it appeared a new "architectural" element in the park - two destroyed Nazi tanks. We, of course, did not know, how the tanks got there, but it was to us great news. It meant that the Red Army is not dead, as the Nazi propaganda was claiming through signs on walls of buildings and through loud speakers...

I told my aunt about the tanks. She explained to me, that the tanks have been brought, probably, for repair in the steel fabricating plant, located near the Red Square.

... Somewhere in the world, it was a power, which demolished the power of those Nazi tanks! One, who can produce such damage, must be very mighty... Both tanks had been heavily damaged. The guns on both tanks had been bent, which made them look rather funny then terrible. The caterpillars on both tanks had been broken. One tank had a visible dent on the side of its tower. The other tank had a hole on the side of its tower, and the paint was burned almost on its entire visible surface...

... We were crawling all over the demolished tanks, and celebrated in our hearts our victory...

... As the events will soon show, it was "a little bit" early for a celebration...

Defeat of the Soviet troops on the Southern and Southern-Western Fronts by the Nazis as a result of Stalin's mistake

Elsewhere in the world, at the end of April 1942 the offensive of the Soviet troops in Crimea ended unsuccessfully. The troops of the Crimean Front under General D.T. Kozlov's command without reaching their goal, experienced significant losses. The Supreme Command ordered the front's Command to turn to rigid offensive.

On May 8, 1942 the enemy, after concentration of its Blow Group and powerful air craft formations against the Crimean Front burst its defense. The Soviet troops, appearing in a critical situation, had been forced to withdraw from Kerch.

The defeat in the Kerch region seriously complicated the situation in Sevastopol', where the defenders of the City conducted a severe battle since October 1941. Now, after capturing Kerch, the German Command concentrated all its forces against Sevastopol'.

On July 4, 1942, after nine months of siege, and severe battles, in which the Soviet sailors and fighters of infantry obtained immortal glory, Sevastopol' had been left by the Soviet troops. Crimea had been totally lost.

On May 3, 1942 the Northern-Western Front started the offensive against the 16th German Army in the Demyansk region. The battle lasted an entire month and did not bring any success to the Soviet troops. However, the Germans suffered great losses.

On May 12, 1942 the troops of the Southern-Western Front started the offensive in the direction to Har'kov, inflicting (as it had been planned) two blows: one from the Volchansk region, and the other from the Barvenkov projection.

At the beginning the operation developed successfully. The Soviet troops burst the enemy's defense and within three days advanced by 25 - 50 kilometers. Stalin was satisfied. That gave him a reason to reproach the General Headquarters with the fact that because of the Headquarters insistence he almost canceled the operation so successfully developing.

However soon the situation changed. The security of the operation in the area Lozovaya-Barvenkovo-Slavyansk was supposed to be provided by the Southern Front (Commander General Malinovskiy). The Command of that Front did not properly taken into account the magnitude of the threat from the side of Kramatorsk, where a large group of German tank-armored and motorized troops was finishing its concentration.

In the morning on May 17, 1942 eleven German divisions from the Group of General Kleist started the offensive from the region Slavyansk-Kramatorsk against the 9th and 57th Soviet armies of the Southern Front. The defense had been broken. Within two days the enemy got out into the flank of the left wing of the Southern-Western Front in the Petrovsk region.

In the evening on May 17, the Chief of General Headquarters A.M. Vasilevskiy contacted the Chief of Headquarters of the 57th Army General A.F. Anisov, who reported that their army is in a critical situation.

Vasilevskiy immediately reported that to Stalin, and proposed to cancel the offensive of the Southern-Western Front, and a part of forces from its Blow Group to direct for the liquidation of the threat, which appeared from the side of Kramatorsk. Other methods to save the situation did not exist, because in that region there was no reserves of the Supreme Command, which the Front could use.

As G.K. Zjukov stated, Stalin did not like to change his decisions. After talking to Timoshenko, he declared to Vasilevskiy "... the measures, undertaken by the Command of the direction are sufficient to beat off the blow of the enemy against the Southern Front. Because of that the Southern-Western Front will continue the offensive ...".

On May 18, 1942 the situation on the Southern-Western Front sharply worsened. The General Headquarters once again proposed to cancel the offensive operation near Har'kov. It proposed to turn the main forces of the Barvenkov Blow Group, to liquidate the break, made by the enemy, and to restore the situation of the 9th Army.

However Timoshenko and Khrushchev insisted on their plan.

On May 19, 1942 the situation on the Southern-Western direction became catastrophic for the Soviet troops. The blow group of the enemy burst into the rear of the Soviet troops. Only now had been given the order to cancel the offensive on Har'kov and to turn the main forces of the Barvenkov Blow Group against the troops of Kleist. However, it was already late.

On May 23, 1942 the 6th, 57th Armies, part of the 9th Army and the Operative Group of General Bobkin appeared to be surrendered. Many of those units managed to get out from the surrender. However, some of them could not do it, and fought to the last drop of blood.

38

I.V. Stalin to W. Churchill

Personal & Confidential

Thank You for the message, transferred to me recently by Mr. Kerry. I had a conversation with Mr. Kerry, and I have an impression that our cooperative work will be conducted in an atmosphere of complete mutual trust.

I am expressing to You the gratitude of the Soviet Government for the assurance that the Government of Great Britain will consider any use by the Germans of poison gases against the USSR as if it would be directed against Great Britain, and that the Britain

military air forces will immediately use the great stocks of gas bombs in their possession to bomb appropriate targets in Germany.

Our data shows that not only the Germans, but also the Finns may begin to apply poison gases against the USSR. I would like that whatever would said in Your message about responding attacks against Germany would also be spread over Finland in case if the later would attack the USSR with application of poison gases.

... Of course, if the British Government would like so, the USSR is ready in its turn to declare such a warning to Germany keeping in mind a possible Germany's gas attack against England.

The Soviet Government considers that the declaration by the British Government of the aforementioned Warning to Germany would be appropriate to make not later than by the end of April or beginning of May.

The Soviet Government would be highly thankful if the British Government would be able to help the USSR to obtain in England the lacking means of chemical defense, and also means for responding chemical blow keeping in mind the possibility of Germany's attack against USSR. If You do not have any objections, I could direct in the nearest future to England a person specifically for this business.

29 March 1942

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XXII. "You will work for the Glory of the Great Germany..."

... Some time after my recovery from typhus, it was announced that the Jewish population of Mogilyov would be sent out from the city for works. As it became known later, the Romanian authorities, being afraid that typhus and other infectious diseases would pass from the infected Jewish population to the Nazis and the Romanian garrison, decided to deport the Jews from Mogilyov to an extermination camp in the village Pechera...

It was announced an order commanding where and when to come. The order stated that the Jews are being sent to work for the "glory of the Great Germany". Disobedience of orders of the commandant's office threatened with "military execution", i.e. death. Nobody had any doubts in the fulfillment of that promise of the "great Germany"...

... Shortly after that order, early in the morning the Jewish population of Mogilyov-Podol'sk started to gather outside the city under the railroad embankment near the tobacco factory.

It was announced that everything made of gold, silver, platinum, all valuable items and jewelry must be handed over to the Nazi officer sitting near a little table... Disobedience of that order threatened with military execution on the spot...

... Long hours of waiting had been passing. We already passed over to the Nazi officer what was valuable with us long ago. But people had been still going and going to that table, and giving up what was the treasures of their lives, and, may be treasures of the lives of their ancestors...

The gathering territory was surrounded with barbed wire on three sides. At the top of the hill, i.e. on the railroad, guards with machine guns and German sheep-dogs had been located, so that nobody would be able to escape.

...It was a beautiful sunny day. We were sitting on the ground in the sun already for a few hours. Babies started to cry. Elderly and sick people started to lose their consciousness... And in spite of the beautiful day, the entire picture looked grim...

Something unreal, surrealistic was going on: two - three platoons of Nazis and Romanians with machine guns had been robbing a population of an entire city in the middle of the day light... And the bright hot sun only emphasized the unimaginable...

... After a while, near the Nazi officer was piling up a hill of looted treasures...

After the line to the Nazi officer exhausted, the Nazis undertook a "clean-up" raid. They walked between the rows of people, sitting on the ground, and looked for hidden jewelry and other treasures.

The unfortunate, by whom the Nazis found any valuables, had been executed on the spot, as it was "promised"... That was performed in a cold-blooded "business-like" fashion - the sons of the "supreme" nation put their guns to the heads of their innocent defenseless victims and pulled the triggers...

Summer 1942: the situation before the Stalingrad Battle

Elsewhere in the world the severe battles on the entire Southern-Western direction continued. The Soviet troops, under the blows of the superior forces of the enemy, had been forced with great losses to retreat back of the Oskol River, trying to fasten on rear frontiers.

On June 28, 1942 the enemy started more widely offensive actions. It inflicted a blow from the Kursk region in the Voronezh direction against the 13th and 40th armies of the Bryanskiy Front.

On June 30, 1942 the 6th German Army started the offensive from the Volchansk region in the direction to Ostrogozjsk, and burst the defense of the 21st and 28 Soviet armies. The situation of the Soviet troops on the Voronezh direction significantly worsened. A part of these troops had been surrendered.

In spite of great help of the Supreme Command and General Headquarters, the situation on the Bryanskiy Front had been worsening daily. Part of the problem was insufficient management of the troops by the Front- level and armies-levels Commands. Because of that the Supreme Command reorganized the situation and divided the Bryanskiy Front into two fronts. The Commander of the new Voronezhskiy Front became N.F. Vatutin, the Commander of the Bryanskiy Front became K.K. Rokossowskiy instead of F.I. Golikov.

In the Voronezh region participated in the battles the 6th and 60th infantry armies and the 5th Tank Army, which had been given to the front by the Supreme Command. That enforced the stability of the defense of the Soviet troops, however did not liquidate the serious thread of breaking the front by the enemy through the Don River and possible blow along Don in the direction to Stalingrad.

As a result of loosing the Crimea, and defeat of the Soviet troops in the regions of Barvenkovo, Donbass and Voronezh, the enemy captured again the strategic initiative, and being enforced by fresh reserves, started impetuous advancement to Volga River and Caucasus.

In the middle of July the enemy had forced the Soviet troops behind Don River trying to burst to Stalingrad. As a result of the forced retreat of the Soviet troops, the enemy had captured the wealthy areas of Don and Donbass. It appeared a direct threat of the enemy getting out to Volga and Northern Caucasus, threat of loosing the Kuban' region and all the roads connected to Caucasus, and the possible loss of that most important economic region, which supplied the Soviet army and the industry with oil.

On July 28, 1942 the Supreme Commander J.V. Stalin issued an order # 227. That order established severe measures to be applied to discipline-breakers and panic-mongers. It blamed the "retreating" spirits. It said that the iron law for the acting troops must become the request "No step back!" ...

...First of all it was necessary to stop the German troops on their way to Volga. The Supreme Command established a new, Stalingrad Front, and included into that front the 62nd Army under General V. Ya. Kolpakchi command, the 63rd Army under General V.I Kuznetsov command, and the 64th Army under General V.I Chuykov command. The 21st Army under General A.I. Danilov command had also been included from the former (now liquidated) Southern-Western Front.

The Military Council of the former Southern-Western Front accepted the newly created Stalingrad Front. The Front had been enforced with the being then formed 1st and 4th

Tank armies, and with survived units of the 28th, 38th and 57th armies and the Volga Military Fleet.

On the approaches to Stalingrad had been unfolded the preparation of defensive and enforced frontiers. As during the defense of Moscow, many thousands of citizens participated in the erection of the frontiers and had been selflessly preparing the city for defense.

A great organizing work had been performed by the Stalingrad Communist Party organization in reorganizing the industry for the needs of the front, in forming workers detachments of self-defense and preparation of home guards, in evacuation from the city of children, elderly people and state treasures.

...During its retreat the Southern Front experienced large losses. In its four armies had been left slightly more than 100,000 men. In order to enforce the management of the Soviet troops in the Northern-Caucasian direction, the Supreme Command liquidated the Southern Front, and the remainder of its troops transferred into the Northern-Caucasian Front under the command of newly assigned Marshal S.M. Budyonniy.

39

Received 10 April 1942

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

Personal & Confidential

I am answering Your message of 29 March.

1. At the beginning of May I will make a declaration, in which the Nazis will be warned about our use of poison gases in response to similar attack on Your country. The warning, of course, will relate to Finland in an equal degree, and Finland will be also mentioned, while I do not visualize how we can reach it.
2. Please, send Your specialist in anti-chemical defense and counterattack for the precise explanation of what materials the Soviet Government needs to obtain from England. We will then do everything possible to satisfy his requests.
3. Of course, if necessary, we, before getting the information from that specialist, will be able to send to You with the first ship at least 1,000 tons mustard gas & 1,000 tons chlorine. Spraying with mustard gas introduces a greater danger for troops in the open field than for citizens in towns.

XXIII. "From here we will never come out..."

... Later that deportation day, after the Nazis finally became satisfied with the "results" of their robbery and murdering, they distributed to us bread - one loaf per family, - forced us into railway cargo carriages, which had already been waiting on the railroad, up the steep hill.

The bread, given to us, generated a sense of hope: maybe everything is not so hopeless, just follow the rules of the murderers, and you may hope to stay alive...

... The cargo carriages had been packed with people. There was hardly room to stand. And the only supply of fresh air was through a little opening with a steel gate at the top of the carriage's wall.

Younger people were trying to give the place near that air supply to mothers with crying babies and to elderly and sick people... Later some inventive men made a few chinks in the wooden side walls, and larger holes in the floor... The carriage was a little hell on wheels...

... After a few long hours of riding, which seemed as an eternity, the train arrived at the railroad station Rahny. The doors of the carriages had been pushed aside by the Nazis, allowing the life-saving fresh air to come in...

It was ordered to quickly empty the cargo carriages, to line up in a column of route, and follow the Nazi guards. The people followed those orders as quickly as they could - every delay promised death on the spot...

The picture was gloomy: worn out mothers with babies in their hands and some belongings on their backs, still supporting their elderly and sick relatives, who could hardly stay on their feet; little children scared to death, trying to understand what is going on, and trying to help the worn out adults. Shouting and crying women and children, who lost each other in the bustle, with their faces distorted by horror...

... Finally, the column was formed under the guards' constant shouting ("Shnell! Shnell!"), pushing and kicking the victims.

... It took the column a few hours to cover the few kilometers from the railroad station Rahny to the concentration (and, as it turned out extermination) camp Pechera... Finally, we approached the Pechera village. We slowly moved along the road, past high stone walls of the Pototsky castle.

... We stood in front of large forged gates. Loudly played glib German music... The sun was hot... Something extremely terrible, sinister was in that picture with the worn out to death miserable looking people. And my aunt, looking at the toll gates and high stone walls of the castle, said: "From here we will already never come out..."

Summer 1942, severe situation for the Soviet troops: Stalin turns to Zjukov

Elsewhere in the world, in the summer 1942 the events on the Northern-Caucasian Front had been developing obviously not in favor of the Soviet troops. The outnumbering forces of the enemy insistently advanced ahead. Soon, the German troops got out to the Kuban' River.

The enemy had captured the cities Maykop and Krasnodar, and then after capturing Mozdok city and almost all mountain passes, threatened to capture Suhumi city.

In those days of severe challenges the peoples of Caucasus did not waver. The people of Gruzia, Armenia and Azerbaydjan supplied the Acting Army with food and other necessities. They formed armed units, volunteers had been joining the Soviet Army. Those undertakings helped to enforce the acting Soviet fronts. Hitler's wish that the Caucasian peoples would separate from the Soviet Union with the coming of the German-Fascist troops had totally failed.

Great help in the struggle with the enemy had been provided to the Acting army by the partisan units, which had been formed out of courageous mountaineers, who knew excellently their regions, mountain passes and pathos. Their bold attacks imposed fear on the German troops and inflicted on them significant losses.

To the second half of July 1942 the Stalingrad Front included 38 divisions. Out of that number only 16 divisions managed to posses defensive positions in the main band. Those divisions had been confronted by the troops of the 6th German Army, which to that moment included 18 well-completed and technically equipped divisions. The balance of forces had been in favor of the enemy: in manpower - 1.2 to 1.0, in tanks 2.0 to 1.0, in air crafts - 3.6 to 1.0. Only in artillery and mortars the forces had been approximately equal.

In the following, because of the persistent resistance of the Soviet forces on the approaches to Stalingrad, the enemy had been forced to relocate its 4th Tank Army from the Caucasian direction for the blow from the side of Kotel'nikov city, and additionally to unfold a part of the forces of the satellite armies.

In correspondence with the Directive # 45 of the German Supreme Command, the "B" Group of armies, being covered up on the North in the middle of the Don River (where successively had been unfolding the Hungarian, Italian and Romanian troops), intended

to impetuously capture Stalingrad, Astrahan' and firmly to fasten on the Volga River, cutting off Caucasus from the center part of the Soviet Union. To secure the success of that task the main forces - 1,200 combat aircraft - of the 4th German Air Fleet had been provided.

On July 26, 1942 German tank-armored and motorized troops burst the defense of the 62nd Army and got out in the Kamenskiy region. To counteract that break the Soviet Supreme Command ordered to immediately bring into the battle the 1st and 4th Tank armies, which had been in the process of forming with only 240 tanks, and two infantry divisions. Those troops could not stop the enemy, but somewhat delayed its advancement.

During the first half of August, on the approaches to Stalingrad had been going on severe battles. The Soviet troops, based on enforced positions, heroically defended every bit of the land, and conducted counterblows, wearing out and bleeding white the enemy troops.

Since the troops of the Stalingrad Front had been stretched over 700 kilometers and it appeared difficulties in their managing, the Front had been divided in two fronts - Stalingrad Front and Southern-Eastern Front. The Commander of the Stalingrad Front was General V.N. Gordov, who replaced Marshal Timoshenko. The Front included the 62nd, 63rd, 21st armies and the 4th Tank Army; the just forming 16th Air force Army under command of General S.I. Rudenko had also been included.

The Southern-Eastern Front included the 57th, 51st, 64th, 1st Guardian and 8th Air force Army. General A.I. Eryomenko had been assigned Commander of that front.

After multi-day severe battles on August 23, 1942 the 14th Tank corps of the enemy burst into the Vertyachi region, and splitting the Stalingrad defense in two parts, arrived at Volga in the region Latoshinka -Rynok. The 62nd Army had been cut off from the main forces of the Stalingrad Front. Because of that this army had been assigned to the Southern-Eastern Front.

The German bombarding aviation inflicted on Stalingrad barbarian bombarding turning the city into ruins. Peaceful civilians had been killed, industrial complexes and cultural treasures had been destroyed.

...During those difficult times the Soviet Supreme Command ordered to conduct in the Western direction a number of special offensive operations with the purpose to bind the enemy's reserves and to prevent relocation of the enemy's troops to Stalingrad.

...On August 27, 1942 Stalin called G.K. Zjukov. After asking about the situation on the Western Front, Stalin said:

- You need as soon as possible to come to the Supreme Command.

I.V. Stalin to W. Churchill

Personal & Confidential

1. Thank You for the expressed willingness to declare at the beginning of May to Germany and Finland a warning regarding application by England of poison gases in case if Germany and Finland will apply them in the war against the USSR.
I am expressing my gratitude for the readiness to deliver 1,000 tons of mustard gas & 1,000 tons of chlorine. But because the USSR has a more urgent need in other chemical products, the Soviet Government would like to receive 1,000 tons calcium hypochloride and 1,000 tons chloramine instead of the aforementioned products, or, if the delivery of those products is impossible, 2000 tons of liquid chloride in cylinders.

The Soviet Government intends to send to London the Vice-Minister of the Chemical Industry A. G. Kasatkin as its expert in chemical defense and counteroffensive

2. Recently the Soviet Government received from Mr. Iden proposals for two agreements between the USSR & England, significantly different in certain items from the texts of agreements, which had been considered during the time of Mr. Iden's visit to Moscow. Since that condition leads to new discords, which are difficult to exhaust in the order of a correspondence, the Soviet Government decided, in spite of all the difficulties, to send to London V.M. Molotov to exhaust through personal negotiations all the problems, which prevent the signing of the agreements.
This is also necessary because the problem of establishing the Second Front in Europe, considered in the last message of the USA President Roosevelt to me with the invitation of V.M. Molotov to Washington for the discussion of that problem, requires a preliminary exchange of opinions between representatives of our governments.

Please, accept my gratitude and wishes of success in the struggle with Great Britain's enemies.

I. Stalin

22 April 1942

The messages ## 41 & 42, exchanged between Stalin & Churchill in April 1942, do not contain any significant information regarding material or military help from Britain or USA to the USSR.

43

I.V. Stalin to W. Churchill

Confidential

I want to ask You a favor. Currently, there have been accumulated on the approach to Island and approaching from America to Island about 90 ships with important military supplies for the USSR. I knew that the British navy is delaying sending of those ships for a prolonged time because of the difficulties of organizing the convoy.

I realize the real difficulties of that business and know about the sacrifices, which England had experienced in that business.

Nevertheless, I consider it possible to turn to You with my request to do everything possible for providing the delivery of those shipments to the USSR during the month of May, when that is especially needed for the Front.

Please, accept my gratitude and wish of success.

I.Stalin

6 May 1942

44

Received 11 May 1942

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

I received Your telegram of 6 May and thank You for Your message and gratitude. We decided to strike the way to You with the maximal amount of military materials. Because of the presence of "Tirpitz" and other enemy's surface ships in the Trondheim, the passage of each convoy became a serious navy operation. We will continue to do everything possible in our power.

Of course, Your navy advisors already pointed out to You the dangers, to which the convoys are exposed from the attacks of the surface forces, submarines and from the air from the different enemy's bases, located along the entire way of the convoys movement.

Because of the bad weather, the scale of the attacks, which the Germans are capable to conduct so far, are significantly smaller than those, which we can expect in the future.

We are throwing all our useful resources to solve this problem, weakening with the risk for ourselves our convoy escorts in the Atlantic for that purpose; and You, undoubtedly, Know that we experienced heavy navy losses during the conduct of those operations.

I am sure that You will not object my complete sincerity, and also that I draw a special attention to the necessity to increase the help, which is provided by Navy and air force of the USSR for the secure movement of the convoys.

For the receiving by You of a significant part of the materials, which are being loaded on the ships in the UK and in the USA, it is important that the Navy and the military aviation of the USSR clearly understand, that they must be responsible to a significant extend for the convoys, weather arriving or returning, in the area to the East of meridian 28* of Eastern length in the waters, located out of the visibility of the Murmansk shore.

The following types of help are required from the USSR armed Forces:

- (a) enforced and more decisive help from the surface forces of the USSR;
- (b) providing bombers with a radius of actions sufficient for powerful bombing of the air ports, possessed by the Germans, during the movement of the convoys;
- (c) providing of air craft fighters of remote action to cover up the convoys in the part of their movement, where they approach to Your shores;
- (d) air craft and ship patrols against submarines.

When tomorrow in the evening (on Sunday) I will give a speech on the radio, I intend to make a declaration, warning the Germans that if they start a chemical war against the Russian armies, we, surely, will immediately pay the same to Germany.

45

Sent 12 May 1942

I.V. Stalin to W. Churchill

I received Your message 11 May and am expressing my thanks for the promises to take actions to the maximal delivery of military materials to the USSR. We completely understand what kind of difficulties Great Britain has to overcome and what size of heavy navy losses You are exposed to conducting this great task.

Regarding Your proposition related to taking larger efforts on the part of the USSR navy and air force for the protection of the transports in the area, which You indicated, You can be assured that everything possible on our part will be conducted immediately. With that in mind, however, it is necessary to take into account, that our navy forces, as You know, are quite limited, and the air force in its almost complete totality, is involved in the work on the Front.

Please, accept my sincere gratitude,

I. Stalin

Messages ## 46 - 51 between I. V. Stalin and W. Churchill (May 1942) contain basically information concerning the convoy's movement from Britain to the USSR with the military supplies, and about V. M. Molotov's visit to London (on his way to & from the USA) and signing political agreements between Britain & the USSR on friendship & cooperation.

Message # 52 contains a warning from W. Churchill about a possible attack of the Murmansk port by the Germans. Message # 53 is Stalin's response to message # 52. Message # 54 from Churchill to Stalin is a purely political message.

Received 10 July 1942

55

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

I just found out from President Roosevelt that You approved the delivery to our armed forces in Egypt 40 bombers "Boston", which had been delivered to Basra on their way to You.

In those times it would be hard to turn to You with such a request, and I am much obliged to You for Your quick and generous response. The bombers are immediately directed into the battle, where our planes are imposing heavy losses upon the enemy.

56

Received 18 July 1942

W. Churchill to I. V. Stalin

In that message Churchill, concerned with the safety of the British navy, "explains" in lengthy words the difficulties of providing convoys with military shipments to the USSR, actually refusing to ship the promised military help. He also mentioned the "possibility" of opening the Second Front in Europe in 1943...

#57

Received 23 July 1942

Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Received Your Message of 18 July.

One can see from it that, firstly, the Government of Great Britain refuses to continue supplying the Soviet Union with military materials over the Northern way and, secondly, in spite of the known coordinated English-Soviet communiqué about taking urgent measures to organizing the Second Front in 1942, the British Government is postponing that business until 1943.

Our navy experts consider the arguments of English navy specialists concerning the necessity to stop the delivery of military materials to the Northern ports of the USSR insolvent. They are convinced that with a good will and readiness to fulfill the pledged oneself obligations the deliveries could be conducted regularly with larger losses for the Germans. The order of the English Admiralty to the 17th convoy to leave the transports and to return to England, and the transport ships to dissipate and to move to Soviet ports alone without an escort our specialists consider incomprehensible and unexplainable. Of course, I do not consider the regular delivery into the Northern Soviet ports without risk or losses. However, in a war situation no one large operation could be accomplished without risk and losses. You, of course, are aware that the Soviet Union is experiencing incomparably more serious losses. In any case, I could not by any means assume that the Government of Great Britain would refuse to deliver to us military materials just at the moment when the Soviet Union especially needs the delivery of military materials, at the moment of serious stress on the Soviet-German Front. It is understood, that the delivery through the Iranian ports could by no means compensate the loss, which would take place by stopping the delivery by the Northern way.

With regard to the second problem, i.e. the opening of the Second Front in Europe, I am afraid that this problem starts to be taken not seriously. Based on the current situation on the Soviet-German Front, I must declare most categorically that the Soviet Government cannot reconcile with the postponement up to 1943 of the opening of the Second Front in Europe.

I hope that You would not interpret as an offence, that I considered as a necessity to openly and honestly express my view point and the view point of my colleagues on the problems expressed in Your message.

I. Stalin

58

Prime Minister to Prime Minister Stalin
Top secret

1. We are taking preliminary preparative measures (look at my next message) for sending a large convoy to Arhangel'sk in the first week of September.
2. I would like that You would invite me to meet with You personally in Astrahan', in the Caucasus, or in some other appropriate place. We would be able to consider problems, affiliated with the war, and in a friendly contact to take cooperative decisions. I would be able to inform You about plans of offensive operations in 1942, which I coordinated with President Roosevelt. I would bring with me my Chief of the Imperial Headquarters.
3. I am immediately leaving for Cairo. As You could easily imagine, I have there serious business. From there I could, if You would wish so, to inform You about the appropriate date for our meeting, which as far as I am concerned, could happen between 10 and 13 August, if, of course, everything will be OK.
4. The Military Cabinet approved my propositions.

31 July 1942.

XXIV.A little history

The extermination camp "Dead loop" was located in the former estate of count Pototsky in the Pechera village. After the 1917 revolution, during the Soviet time, the estate had been converted into a resort...

... The Pototskys had a very good taste, and knew where and how to build, and how to decorate their palaces and estates. For those purposes they were inviting the best architects, sculptors, decorators and landscapers.

For their estate in the Pechera village, they selected a place on the top of the hill, overlooking the South Bug River. The large territory of that place was surrounded on three sides with a high granite wall. The fourth side introduced a natural obstacle - a toll granite riverbank, sharply dropping to the waters of the South Bug River.

On that territory was established a great park with exotic trees and bushes. In addition to the palace, a private church with a bell-tower was also erected.

Underneath the church was built a family burial vault...

In addition, storage and auxiliary buildings, and barracks had been erected along with stables for horses and park decorating structures.

Situation near Stalingrad – Zjukov is assigned Vice Supreme Commander of the Soviet Armed Forces

On August 27, 1942, during an offensive operation of the Western Front, G.K. Zjukov received a phone call from A.N. Poskrebyshev (Stalin's secretary). He informed Zjukov that on August 26, the State Committee of Defense, considering the situation in the South of the country, decided to assign Zjukov as Vice Supreme Commander.

Poskrebyshev warned to be at 2.00 on the Commander's station and to wait for Stalin's call. Zjukov asked Poskrebyshev a number of questions, however, as usually, had not received from him any definitive answers, just "I do not know. He would, probably, tell you about that himself". "However,- states Zjukov,- even from those laconic answers I understood that the State Defense Committee is highly worrying for the result of the fight in the Stalingrad region".

Soon after that Zjukov received a call from Stalin. After asking about the situation on the Western Front, Stalin said:

- You need to come to the Supreme Command as soon as possible. Leave instead of you the Chief of the Front's Headquarters. Think over, who should be assigned as the Front Commander instead of you.

That was the end of the conversation. Stalin did not tell Zjukov about the assignment of him as Vice Supreme Commander. Probably he wanted to declare that during the personal meeting. "Generally speaking,- states Zjukov,- Stalin would talk over the phone only about absolutely necessary items at the given moment. He requested from us to be extremely careful during phone conversations, especially in the zones of acting troops, where there was no stationary means for making conversations secretive.

Late in the evening on the same day,- continues Zjukov,- I arrived in the Kremlin. Stalin was working in his office. Here had also been present a few members of the State Defense Committee.

Stalin said that the situation in the South is pretty bad, and it is possible that the Germans would capture Stalingrad. Not much better is the situation on the Northern Caucasus. He declared, that the State Defense Committee decided to assign me,- Zjukov continues,- as Vice Supreme Commander, and to send to the Stalingrad region. "Now,- Stalin said,- there are Vasilevskiy, Malenkov and Malyshev.

- Malenkov would stay with you, but Vasilevskiy must return to Moscow. When can you fly out? - asked me Stalin.*
- I answered,- Zjukov continues,- that I need a day to study the situation, and on August 29 I would be able to fly out to Stalingrad.*
- That is good. Are you hungry?- suddenly asked Stalin.- It would not hurt to take some refreshment.*

Sandwiches and tea had been brought in. During the tea Stalin shortly informed about the situation by 20.00 on August 27. After informing in short about what happened in Stalingrad, Stalin said that the Supreme Command decided to allocate to the Stalingrad Front the 24th, 66th and the 1st Guardian army.

- Because of the difficult situation in Stalingrad,-said the Supreme Commander,- we ordered to immediately transfer the 1st Guardian Army under General Moskalenko's command, into Lozno region, and on September 2 to inflict a counterblow with that army and other units of the Stalingrad Front on the enemy's group which burst to Volga. Simultaneously, the 66th Army of General Malinovskiy and the 24th Army of General Kozlov are also being transferred to the Stalingrad Front.*

-You must take measures so that the 1st Guardian Army of General Moskalenko would inflict a counterblow on September 2, and under the cover of that army to introduce in to the initial regions the 24th and 66th armies,-said Stalin to Zjukov. - Introduce those two armies into the battle immediately otherwise we would loose Stalingrad.

It was clear,- Zjukov continues,- that the upcoming battle has a great military-political meaning. With the fall of Stalingrad the enemy's command would get the opportunity to cut off the South from the Central part of the country. We could also lose Volga River - a highly important artery of the country, over which had been transferred large amounts of supplies from the Povolj'e zone and Caucasus.

The Supreme Command directed into the Stalingrad region everything then possible. Only the newly forming strategic reserves, intended for the conduct of the upcoming fight, temporarily had not been introduced into action. Urgent measures had been undertaking to increase the production of aircraft, tanks, weaponry, ammunition and other material means in order to activate all that on time for the defeat of the enemy's group which burst into the Stalingrad region.

59

Received 31 July 1942

Prime Minister to Prime Minister Stalin

Personal & Confidential

In addition to my previous message. We are taking preliminary measures for sending a convoy of 40 ships in the first week of September. I have to say, however, directly, that if the threat from the air for the German's surface military ships in the Barrens Sea will not be strong enough to keep them off from the operations against the convoy, we have small chances, as shown by experience of #17 convoy, to transport safely even a third of the ships. As You, obviously, know, this situation had been discussed with Mayskiy, and, as I understand, the later informed You, that we consider necessary a minimum protection from the air.

60

To Prime Minister Churchill from Prime Minister Stalin

Top Secret

Received both Your messages of 31 July.

By the present, in the name of the Soviet Government I am inviting You to come to the USSR for a meeting with the members of the Government.

I would be very grateful to You, if You would be able to come to the USSR for cooperative consideration of urgent problems of war against Hitler, the threat of which in relation to England, the USA and the USSR had reached a special strength.

I think, that the most appropriate place for our meeting would be Moscow, which Myself, members of the Government and the commanders of the General Headquarters of the Soviet Army can not leave at the current moment of the tense struggle with the Germans.

The presence of the Chief of the Imperial General Headquarters would be very desirable.

The date of the meeting I would ask You to define for Your convenience, depending on how You would be able to conclude Your business in Cairo, knowing in advance that I would not have any objections regarding that date.

I am expressing to You my gratitude for the consent to direct the next convoy with military shipments to the USSR at the beginning of September. In spite of all the difficulties of taken away the aviation from the Front, we will make all the possible measures to enforce the air defense of the transport ships and the convoy.

31 July 1942.

Messages ## 61 - 63 between Churchill & Stalin (August 1 - 6, 1942) contain information regarding Churchill's expected visit to Moscow.

Message # 64 from Churchill to Stalin contains information about the losses and damages experienced by the British navy while accompanying a convoy with military supplies for the USSR. The convoy was moving to Malta Island.

65

I. V. Stalin to W. Churchill

MEMORANDUM

As a result of exchange of opinions in Moscow, which took place on August 12 this year, I established that Prime Minister of Great Britain Mr. Churchill considers impossible the organizing of the Second Front in Europe in 1942.

As it is known, establishing of the Second Front in Europe in 1942 had been decided during Molotov's visit to London, and had been reflected in the coordinated English-Soviet Communiqué, published on June 12 this year.

It is also known that establishing of the Second Front in Europe had as its goal the pull back of the German forces from the Eastern front to the West, establishing in the West of a serious base of resistance to the German-fascists forces and, in such a way, relief of the situation of the Soviet forces on the Soviet-German Front in 1942.

It is clear, that the Soviet Command built the Plan of its summer and fall operations based on the establishing of the Second Front in Europe in 1942.

It is easy to understand, that the refusal of the British Government to open the Second Front in 1942 in Europe inflicts a moral blow to the entire Soviet public, expecting the creation of the Second Front, complicates the situation of the Soviet Army on the front and imposes damage to the plans of the Soviet Command.

I do not even mention the fact, that the difficulties for the Soviet Army, being created as a result of the refusal to open the Second Front in 1942 will definitely worsen the military situation of England and other allies.

To me and to my colleagues it seems that the year 1942 introduces the most favorable conditions for the creation of the Second Front in Europe because almost all the forces of the German troops, and, definitely, the best of them, are involved on the Eastern Front; and in Europe is left an insignificant quantity of them, and, in addition, the worst forces.

It is unknown whether 1943 would provide such favorable conditions for the creation of the Second Front as 1942. Because of that we consider that exactly in 1942 it is possible and highly advisable to create the Second Front in Europe. Regretfully, I could not convince in this the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and Mr. Harriman, representative of the President of the USA in the Moscow negotiations, fully supported Mr. Prime Minister.

I. STALIN

13 August 1942

66

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

Top Secret

Memorable Note

In response of the memorandum of Prime Minister Stalin of 13 August Prime Minister of Great Britain announces:

1. The best kind of the Second Front in 1942, the only possible significant in scale operation on the side of the Atlantic Ocean, is "Torch". If this operation will be accomplished in October it will provide more help to Russia than any other plan. This operation is preparing also the way for 1943 and possesses four advantages mentioned by Prime Minister Stalin in the 12 August conversation. The British Government and the USA Government made a decision about that, and all the preparations are going in the most accelerated tempo.
2. In comparison to operation "Torch" an attack of six or eight English-American divisions on the peninsula Sherbur and on the islands of the Channel would be a risky and fruitless operation. The Germans possess in the West a sufficient quantity of troops to block us on that narrow peninsula with the help of enforced lines, and they would concentrate in that place all of their military airforce, which they possess in the West. In accordance with all British navy, military and airforce

organizations, the operation could result in a catastrophe only. Even if we would be able to create a forebridge fortification, this would not pull back even one division from Russia. This would also be a greater bleeding wound for us than for the enemy. And for that matter would be wastefully and senselessly spent experienced personnel and landing means, needed for real operations in 1943. That is our final viewpoint. The Chief of the Imperial General Headquarters will discuss details with the Russian commanders to any degree, which could be desired.

3. Neither Great Britain, nor the United States did brake any promises. I am referring to item 5 of my memorandum handed to Mr. Molotov on 10 June 1942, in which it was clearly said: "Because of that we cannot give any promises". That memorandum was a result of prolonged negotiations, in which it had been exhaustedly clarified that there are very little chances for acceptance of such a plan. Some of those conversations, in which those clarifications had been made, were written down.
4. However, all the conversations regarding the English-American invasion into France this year misinformed the enemy and chained his significant quantities of air and land forces on the French beach of the Channel. It would be inflicted a damage to the common interests, and especially to the Russian interests should appear some public discussions during which the British Government would be forced to disclose to the public the deadly argument, which, in its opinion, it possesses against the operation "Forging hammer". The Russian armies would be significantly discouraged after being assured on that matter, and the enemy could freely pool back more forces from the West. The most intelligent method to be used would be to use the "Forging hammer" as a shield for the "Torch" and to announce the "Torch", after its start, as the Second Front. This is what we are intended to do.
5. We cannot agree that the negotiations with Mr. Molotov about the Second Front, since they had been limited by oral and written reservations, would give any basis for changing strategic planes of the Russian Supreme Command.
6. We confirm again our determination to provide help to our Russian allies by all possible means.

W.C.

14 August 1942

67

W. Churchill to I.V. Stalin

Dear Prime Minister Stalin:

1. Below follows the description concerning the results of the battle for the convoy to Malta. Only three commercial ships out of fourteen arrived at Malta. Two more are being tugged, and would probably arrive at their destination. The three (ships), which already arrived, delivered supplies for a period from two to three months. So, the fortress, which

is important for the situation on the entire Mediterranean Sea, can hold on until it will happen the unavoidable battle in the Western Desert of Egypt and "Torch".

2. We paid for that a high price. The aircraft carrier "Eagle" had been drowned, and the aircraft carrier "Indomitable" had been seriously damaged by three bombs and three close explosions; the fate of the other aircraft carrier is unknown. One destroyer had been drowned together with ten or eleven high-speed ships...

3. I think that it was worse to pay that price. On the other side was the sad condition that the military ships acted between all that enemy's aircraft, based on land. We drowned three submarines and, perhaps, inflicted a serious damage to the aircraft. The Italian cruiser and battleship did not undertake the risk to attack the rest of the convoy when the convoy arrived under the umbrella of the aircraft defense of Malta. The enemy would certainly describe that as a great victory on the sea, and this would definitely be so if not for the strategic meaning of Malta in the role of future planes.

Sincerely Yours

Winston Churchill

Moscow, 14 August 1942.

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Received 17 August 1942

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL TO PRIME MINISTER STALIN

On arrival in Teheran after a fast and quiet flight, I use the opportunity to thank You for Your comradely relationship and hospitality. I am very satisfied with the fact that I visited Moscow: firstly because it was my obligation to express myself, and, secondly, because I am sure that our meeting will be helpful to our business. Please, pass my hello to Mr. Molotov.

69

Received 31 August 1942

W. CHURCHILL TO I. STALIN

Rommel started the offensive to which we had been preparing. Now it can happen a significant battle.

Received 7 September 1942

PERSONAL AND SECRETIVE MESSAGE FROM PRIME
MINISTER Mr. CHURCHILL TO PRIME MINISTER STALIN

1. Convoy P.Q. 18 containing 40 ships left. Since we cannot send our heavy ships into the sphere of action of the enemy's aviation, based on the shore, we allocate powerful impact forces out of destroyers which will be used against the enemy's surface ships, should they attack us eastern to the Medvezjiy island. We are including also into the convoy to protect it from the air attack just built supplemental aircraft carrier. We further put a strong barrier out of submarines between the convoy and the German bases. However, the risk of attack of the German surface ships still remains serious. That danger could be effectively beat off by allocation for actions in the Barrens Sea of impact aviation of such a power, that the Germans would be risking their heavy ships not less than we are risking ours in that region. For reconnaissance purposes we allocate 8 flying ships "Catalina" and 3 airphoto units "Speedfier", which are going to operate from Northern Russia. To increase the scale of airattack, we sent 32 airplanes-torpedocarriers, which on their way suffered some losses, while we hope that at lest 24 of them will be good for operations. Those airplanes together with the 19 bombers and torpedocarriers, 42 fighters of short radius of actions and 43 fighters of long range action allocated by You, I repeat, are not sufficient to impose final blocking action on the enemy. What we need is a large quantity of bombers of long range action. We completely understand that the colossal pressure, which You are experiencing on the major Front of the struggle, makes it hard to allocate a large quantity of Russian long range bombers. However, we need to emphasize the great meaning of that convoy, in which are participating 77 military ships, which during the operation would have to use 15,000 tons of fuel. If You can temporarily allocate an additional quantity of long range bombers to the North, I ask You to do this. This is critically important for our common interest.
2. Rommel's attack in Egypt received a strong rebuff, and I hope that we will be able to get a favorable result during the current month.
3. The "Torch" operation, while being delayed by three weeks in relation to the very early date, about which I told You, is being prepared full speed.
4. I am expecting an answer from the President to certain proposals, which I have made to him regarding the use of the English-American military airforce for actions on Your Southern Flank in the winter. He basically agreed, and I am expecting from him detailed plans. I will after that again telegraph to You. Meanwhile I hope that composing of plans regarding airdromes and communications can continue in the same order with which, by Your approval, Your officers agreed when I was in Moscow. We want for that purpose first to send to Moscow from Egypt a group of officers when You will be ready to accept them.
5. With great admiration we are following the continuous struggle of the Russian Armies. The German's losses are obviously great, and winter is approaching. In my speech in the Lower Chamber on Tuesday I will introduce in an acceptable for You,

as I hope, form the report about my visit to Moscow, about which I keep the most pleasant memoirs.

6. Please, pass my good wishes to Mr. Molotov and thank him for his greetings on the occasion of my safe return. So help us God in the success of all our undertakings.

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XXV. "Life" in the "Dead Loop..."

... We had been placed in a barrack with a concrete floor together with many other families...

... The Pechera extermination camp, also called "The Dead Loop", was under the "supervision" of the Romanian government as was the rest of the territory between the rivers Dniester and South Bug. That territory was allocated by Nazi Germany to Romania, and referred to as Transnistria.

The Romanian government - a collaborator of Nazi Germany - did not want to have a reputation of a murderer of the Jews. On the other hand, it did not want to dissatisfy its patron - Nazi Germany. Because of that, and economical considerations, the Pechera camp did not have gas chambers, or other forceful means of mass destruction. It was meant to be a place for slow dying for the Jews.

The prisoners of the "Dead Loop" were meant to die "the natural way", i.e. in a slow path - from starvation, infectious and other diseases, cold, thirst, exhaustion, forced/slavery labor...

This "humanitarian" annihilation of tens of thousands of Jews was accomplished under the management of marshal Antonescu of Romania in the extermination camps of Pechera, Anan'ev, and other places of Transnistria...

... We had not been given any food, or medical attention. The camp prisoners did not have any means of personal hygiene. Not even showers had been available to us - prisoners...

... More-or-less work-capable camp prisoners had been forced to perform road and other construction work. Hundreds of prisoners had been sent every day to build a highway road and to do ground work for laying cable to Hitler's General Headquarters "Wervolf" near Vinnitsa City. Young strong men and women worked on those super secret objects

until they died... Only a few returned to their families. The rest died because of exhaustive and slavery labor, or had been shot and killed after the works had been completed...

... We had been given two single narrow iron beds with wooden boards instead of mattresses - one for my aunt with her baby-boy and her younger daughter Nina, and the other bed for my grandmother and my older cousin Anna.

All the beds in the barrack, including those two, had been located close to each other, so that I did not even have a spot to sleep near those beds. I found such a spot on the concrete floor behind the internal open door on the entrance into the barrack.

That door was always open, and formed with the nearby wall a triangular space. That space became my "bedroom"...

... In the morning, the work-capable prisoners would line up on the central plaza of the camp, and would be directed for construction works to the secret places by the Nazi guards. Then, the barracks would be cleaned up by the prisoners from the corpses of the people, who died during the last night.

The corpses would be carried out from the barracks, dropped on horse-wagons, carryout of the camp, and then dropped into a ravine outside the camp under the supervision of Romanian guards...

... My grandmother became paralyzed, and soon after that she died...

... Because of the high density of the prisoners in the camp, and also because of starvation, total absence of medical help and means of hygiene, and the spread of diseases, especially typhus, the death rate between the prisoners was very high.

Carrying corpses out of the barracks in the morning became a routine exercise... Even crying for the dead relatives became a rare event - the living would have to save their energy to bury the dead and to try to survive...

... To try to survive meant - first of all - to get any food by any means. And the only means, available to the prisoners, had been what was left from their belongings. The Ukrainian population from the nearby villages (including the Pechera village) would come to the walls of the camp, and would bring food to exchange for personal belongings.

In one place, the camp's wall was interrupted, and the space between two adjacent parts of the wall had been covered with barbed wire. This was the main "market place". The camp prisoners could show their items without approaching the very barbed wire. And the buyers could see those items, and propose a price. After reaching an agreement, the seller and the buyer would quickly approach the barbed fence and exchange their items.

Generally speaking, the camp prisoners were forbidden to approach to the camp walls, or the fence by any conditions. The Ukrainian guards, located in the towers at the corners of the camp, would shoot and kill the prisoners without any warnings. However, near the "market place", because their countrymen would benefit from those exchanges, some of the Ukrainian guards would turn their attention aside, and permit the "sale".

Two of those guards had had an especially sadistic reputation. They often had been seen walking, or riding a bicycle around the camp. One of them - short and stout - with a low forehead, and always with a fierce bulldog-type face (better to say a muzzle), black-haired, was known under the name Smetana.

The other guard - with straight fair hair, sharp-nosed, with a brightened up, almost angel-type expression on his face - you would never imagine, unless you would see him "in action", that this was a sadist and a cold-blooded murderer... Both had been from the local Ukrainian population.

Zjukov's arrival at the Stalingrad Front, confrontation with Stalin's demands; Start of the Stalingrad Battle

Elsewhere in the world, on August 29, 1942 G.K. Zjukov left Moscow from the Central Airport for Stalingrad, and after a four-hour flight landed in a field square near Kamyshin on Volga. "I had been met,- Zjukov wrote,- by A.M. Vasilevskiy, who immediately informed me about the latest events. After a short conversation we went to the Stalingrad Front Headquarters, in Maloe Ivanovo. It was about midnight when we arrived at the Headquarters.

General V.N. Gordov had been at that time on the forefront positions. The Chief of Headquarters D.N. Nikishev and the Chief of the Operational Branch I.N. Rühle had reported the situation. Listening to their report,- Zjukov continues,- it seemed to me that they are not completely confident, that the enemy could be stopped in the Stalingrad region. I called to the Headquarters of the 1st Guardian Army, where at that time General Gordov could be found, and told him to wait for A.M. Vasilevskiy and me. We met with V.N. Gordov and K.S. Moskalenko at the Headquarters of the 1st Guardian Army. Their reports and they themselves produced a very positive impression. I felt that both of them know very well the strength of the enemy and the possibilities of their forces.

After consideration of the situation and the readiness of our forces, we came to a conclusion that to prepare the troops of the concentrating armies we would not be able before September 6, 1942. I immediately reported about that to Stalin. He listened to my report, and said that he agreed.

The offensive of the 1st Guardian Army had been planned by the Supreme Command to begin on September 2. However, because of absence of fuel and due to stretching of the troops during their relocation, the corresponding units did not arrive in the initial

regions by morning of September 2. By request of the army Commander K.S. Moskalenko, I transferred the time of the attack on September 3,- Zjukov continues. -In my report to the Supreme Command had been stated:

"1st Guardian Army could not start the offensive on September 2 because its units had not been able to arrive in the initial positions, to bring ammunition, fuel and to organize the combat. In order not to allow an unorganized introduction of forces into the combat and not to suffer unnecessary losses, after personal check up in the field, [I] transferred the offensive on 5.00 a.m. September 3, 1942.

The offensive of the 24th and 66th armies [I] set on September 5 - 6..."

In the morning on September 3, after an artillery preparation the 1st Guardian Army turned into offensive, however advanced in the direction to Stalingrad by only a few kilometers. The defeat to the enemy had been insignificant. The following advancement of the 1st Guardian Army had been stopped by continuous blows of the enemy's aviation, and also by counterattacks of their tanks and infantry supported by artillery from the Stalingrad region.

On September 3, 1942 Zjukov received from Stalin the following telegram:

"The situation with Stalingrad has worsened. The enemy is positioned in three kilometers from Stalingrad. Stalingrad could be captured today or tomorrow if the Northern Group of troops would not provide an immediate help. Request from the Commanders of our troops, located to the North and to the North-West to Stalingrad to immediately inflict blows on the enemy and to help the Stalingradians. Any delay is impermissible. A delay now is equal to a crime. Throw the entire aviation to help Stalingrad. In Stalingrad itself there is very little aviation left".

Zjukov immediately called Stalin and reported, that he can order to start the offensive tomorrow morning, but the troops of all three armies would be forced to start the battle almost without ammunition because it could be delivered to the artillery positions not earlier than in the evening on September 4. "Besides that,- Zjukov continued,- we can not before that time to coordinate the interaction of the artillery with the tanks and aviation. And without that there would be no result".

- Do you think the enemy would be waiting until you do all of that?.. Eryomenko insists that the enemy can capture Stalingrad during the first attempt if you immediately do not attack from the North.*

Zjukov answered that he does not agree with such an evaluation, and is asking for the permission to start the general offensive on September 5, as it had been planned earlier. "With regard to aviation,-Zjukov continued,- I will immediately order to bombing the enemy with all the forces".

-That is good,- Stalin agreed.- Should the enemy start the general offensive on the City, attack them immediately without waiting for complete preparedness of our forces. Your main task is to distract the German forces from Stalingrad, and, in case of success, to liquidate the corridor, which is dividing the Stalingrad Front from the Southern-Eastern Front.

"Until the morning of September 5,- Zjukov continues,- as we expected nothing significant near Stalingrad happened. At three o'clock in the morning Stalin called Malenkov and asked about the preparedness of troops of the Stalingrad Front for the offensive. Convinced that his order is being executed, Stalin did not call me to the phone".

On the dawn on September 5, 1942 along the entire front of the 24th, 1st Guardian and the 66th armies started artillery and aviation preparation. However, the density of the artillery fire had been not great even on the directions of the main blows, and did not provide the required result.

The attack began after the "Katyushas" salvos. "I watched the attack from the Commander's position of the 1st Guardian Army,-Zjukov wrote. - It had been clear, based on the power of the enemy's fire, which they inflicted on our troops, that our artillery preparation did not produce desired results, and that we can not expect deep advancement of our forces.

After 1.5 -2.0 hours from start of the offensive the Commanders of the troops reported, that in a number of areas the enemy stopped the advancement of our troops with his fire, and is counterattacking with tanks and infantry. The air reconnaissance reported that large groups of the enemy's tanks, artillery and motorized infantry are moving from the region Gumrak-Orlovka-Bol'shaya Rossoshka to the North. The enemy's aviation started the bombing of our troops. In the second half of the day fresh troops of the enemy entered into the battle, and in certain areas pushed back our troops to their initial positions.

The fire battle, which continued through the entire day, almost ended at the evening. We counted the results. Our troops advanced during a day of combat by only 2-4 kilometers. The 24th Army almost left on its initial positions.

To the evening the troops had received additionally shells, mines and other ammunition. Based on the information obtained about the enemy during the day of battle, it had been decided during the night to prepare a new attack, regrouping as necessary the forces wherever it was possible".

Late in the evening Stalin called Zjukov.

- How is it going?

I reported,-wrote Zjukov,- that during the day a very heavy battle continued. To the North of Stalingrad the enemy had been forced to bring into the battle new forces, relocated from the Gumrak region.

- *That is already good: this retracts the enemy's forces from Stalingrad.*

I continued,- wrote Zjukov:

- *Our forces have insignificant advancement, and in a number of cases had been left on their initial positions.*

-What is the matter?

-Because of lack of time our troops had not been able to prepare for the offensive, to conduct artillery scouting and to define the enemy's fire system, and because of that had not been able to destroy that system. And when we started the offensive, the enemy stopped it with their fire and counterattacks. In addition to that, the enemy's aviation during the entire day had complete superiority in the air and bombed our troops.

-Continue the attacks,- Stalin ordered.- Your main task is to retract from Stalingrad as many enemy's forces as possible.

71

Sent 8 September 1942

PERSONAL AND SECRETIVE MESSAGE OF PRIME MINISTER STALIN TO PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL

Your message received 7 September. I understand all the importance of the safe arrival of the convoy P.Q. 18 into the Soviet Union and the necessity to take measures for its defense. Regardless of how hard it is for us currently to allocate an additional quantity of long-range bombers, we decided to do that. Today had been given an order to allocate long range bombers for the purpose that You pointed out.

I wish You success in accomplishing the operation against Rommel in Egypt, and also complete success in accomplishing the operation "Torch".

72

Received 13 September 1942

PERSONAL AND SECRETIVE MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER Mr. WINSTONE CHURCHILL TO PRIME MINISTER STALIN

1. I am very obliged to You for the 48 long-range bombers, 10 airplanes torpedo-carriers and 200 fighters, including 47 long-range fighters, which You, as I just found out, are sending to help to transfer the convoy P.Q. 18.
2. I assume that maybe You would like to know the weight of the bombs dropped by the Royal Air Force on Germany since 1 July of the current year. The total quantity from 1 July until 6 September introduces 11,500 tons. The tonnage dropped on more important locations included: Duysburg - 2,500 tons, Dusseldorf - 1250 tons, Saarbrücken - 1150 tons, Bremen and Hamburg - 1000 tons for each, Osnabrück - 700 tons, Kassel, Wilhelmshafen, Mainz and Frankfurt - total about 500 tons; Nuremberg obtained 300 tons, and many other places - smaller tonnage. 6 of the dropped bombs had a weight 8,000 pounds each, and 1,400 bombs - 4,000 pounds each. We discovered that when in those bombs are applied instantly acting detonators they explode very effectively so that parachutes are not needed.

73

Received 23 September 1942

PERSONAL AND SECRETIVE MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER Mr. WINSTONE CHURCHILL to PRIME MINISTER STALIN

The message contains information regarding the German monthly production of military airplanes and locations of their production. As of September 1, 1942 the total monthly number of military planes produced were 1250 airplanes including 455 long-range bombers, 410 single-engine fighters, and 115 double-engine fighters.

#74

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER Mr. CHURCHILL TO Mr. STALIN

1. From the same source, which I used 1.5 years ago to inform You about the upcoming invasion into Russia, I received the following information. I assume that this source may be absolutely trusted. Please, keep it only for Your information.

Start:

"The Germans already assigned an admiral, who will handle the operations on the Caspian Sea. They have chosen Mahachkala as their main navy base. About 20 ships, including Italian submarines and torpedo-boats, have to be delivered over the railroad from Mariupol' to the Caspian Sea as soon as the line will be opened. Because of the freezing of the Azov Sea the submarines will be loaded before the and of construction of the railroad line".

End.

3. No doubts, You are already prepared to such attacks. It seems to me that more important becomes the plan, about which I told You, regarding the enforcement of Your military Air Force by us with American help on the Caspian and Caucasian theaters with twenty British and American squadrons. After our meeting I did not stop working on that, and I hope that approximately within a week I will receive from the President the final approval, and will be able to make to You a definite united proposal.

Regarding the 154 "Aircobras", which had been removed from convoy P.Q. 19, I personally allowed that on the insistence of General Marshall - American Supreme Commander. Those had been American machines, intended for us and by us intended for You. The American request was insistent and definite, and was connected with the "Torch. General Marshall took an obligation to immediately compensate them with other airplanes over Alaska.

In the nearest 10 days I will advise You about the forthcoming over the telegraph.

30 September 1942

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XXVI. Murder on the chestnut tree

... In about 30 meters from the main spot of the "market place" in the camp grew an old chestnut tree. It was a narrow space between this tree and the stone wall of the camp. That allowed to climb to the top of the wall.

The tree provided many branches, which would cover up the spot on the wall. Prisoners frequently used that spot for exchanging their belongings for food. It seemed, that the tree branches make this spot invisible to the Ukrainian guard, located on the closest observation tower...

... It was a bright and warm sunny day. I saw a youngster - prisoner being approached by two elderly people, asking him about something. I frequently saw that handsome youngster with a kind face, helping elderly and other people. Once, I was even secretly told, that he helps prisoners to escape from our camp. At that time, I could not imagine, how he can do it...

... After a short conversation with the two elderly people, the youngster took some of the things, which they gave him, and started to climb to the top of the wall. In a short while, he started to negotiate with somebody outside the wall, and then would turn to the owners of the sellable items for their decision.

He had a string with a little hook, attached to its end, which he used to lower the "merchandise" and to bring up the exchanged food. He already delivered to the elderly people a basket with some vegetables. Now, he was lowering the emptied basket, and in a short while after that, he held in his hands a little basket with sour cherries. It looked like the exchange had been completed, and the youngster was ready to get down...

Suddenly a shot resounded. The youngster, for a second, became like petrified on the top of the wall, and then started to fall down with the little basket of sour cherries still in his hands... The cherries had a high tag - the life of the beautiful human being... (later it became known, that this murder was Smetana's "job").

... The bullet got into the youngster's head, and killed him instantly. He fell down near the chestnut tree. The ground near that tree was well rammed, and had a little slope, starting at the very tree. The youngster's body laid down on his back, and a little stream of blood was running from his head down the slope, and already formed a little lake at the slope's end...

... Cherries were in that stream and in the lake of blood...

... Blood and death was everywhere...

Stalingrad Battle continues. Zjukov is called back to the Supreme Command. The "Other Decision"

Elsewhere in the world, on September 6, 1942 the Soviet Forces of the Stalingrad Front continued the offensive, and the battle had been even more severe than on the day before. The Soviet aviation had been bombing the enemy during the entire night of September 6. In addition to the air force of the Stalingrad Front the airforce of the Remote Action had also been activated.

During the day the attack of the German positions had been repeated, but, as a day before, it had been beaten off. During September 6, the enemy delivered from the Stalingrad region new units. On a number of dominating heights, the enemy buried in the ground tanks and storming guns, and organized fundamentally equipped positions, which could be destroyed only by powerful fire of artillery. But the Stalingrad Front had such artillery in very limited quantity.

On September 7, Colonel I.N. Ruhle, the Chief of the Operative Branch of the Stalingrad Front, addressed Zjukov:

- *The Supreme Commander is asking do we have enough forces to defeat the enemy?*

"We hopped,- wrote Zjukov,- that relocation of some formations from the Voronezhskiy Front could improve the situation, and transferred to the Supreme Commander the following answer:

- The forces, which the Stalingrad Front has now in its possession, are obviously insufficient for defeating the enemy. It is necessary to concentrate an additional group of forces with the purpose to inflict a more powerful blow to the enemy in the nearest time...". However, a decision of the Supreme Command concerning the relocation of additional divisions did not follow.*

The third and the fourth days of the battles went mostly in competition of the fire means and combats in the air. "On September 10,- Zjukov continues,- after visiting once again the units and formations of the Army, I fastened myself in the conclusion, that to burst the enemy's defense and to liquidate his corridor with the forces in our possession and grouping is impossible. The same viewpoint shared the Generals Gordov, Moskalenko, Malinovskiy, Kozlov and others.

The same day,- Zjukov continues,- I reported to the Supreme Commander the following:

"With the forces currently in possession of the Stalingrad Front we would not be able to burst the corridor and to unite with the troops of the Southern-Eastern Front in the City. The defense front of the German troops had been significantly enforced on the account of the units relocated from near Stalingrad. Further attacks with (our) same forces in the same grouping would be senseless, and our forces would necessary suffer great losses. We need additional troops and time for regrouping for a more concentrated blow of the Stalingrad Front. Army blows are not capable of overturning the enemy".

Stalin answered that it would be good if Zjukov could fly to Moscow and report those problems in person. On September 12, 1942 Zjukov fly out to Moscow, and after four hours was in the Kremlin. A.M. Vasilevskiy, Chief of General Headquarters had also been present. Vasilevskiy reported about concentration in the Stalingrad region new units of the enemy, relocated from the Kotelnikov region, about the battle in the Novorossiysk region and also about the combats in the Grozny direction.

Stalin attentively listened to Vasilevskiy' report and concluded:

-They are bursting to the Grozninskiy oil by any price. Now we will listen to Zjukov.

Zjukov repeated the same what he reported two days ago over the phone. He said that the 24th, 1st Guardian and the 66th armies, which participated in the offensive on September 5 - 11, showed themselves as combat-capable formations. Their main weakness - is the absence of sufficient means of enforcement, little howitzer artillery and tanks, which are required for the support of the infantry formations.

The landscape in the area of the Stalingrad Front,- Zjukov continued,- is extremely disadvantageous for our troops: open spaced, covered with deep ravines, where the

enemy is hiding from fire. Possessing a number of dominating heights, the enemy has a remote artillery observation and can maneuver fire in all directions. In addition the enemy has the possibility to conduct remote artillery fire also from the Kuzmichi-Akatovka region. At such conditions the 24th, 1st Guardian and the 66th armies of the Stalingrad Front can not burst the defense front of the enemy".

-What is necessary for the Stalingrad Front in order to liquidate the corridor of the enemy and to unite with the Southern-Eastern Front?- Stalin asked.

- As a minimum one more full-blooded general-combat army, a tank corps, three tank brigades and not less than 400 howitzer guns. In addition, during the time of the operation it is necessary to concentrate additionally not less than one airforce army,- Zjukov answered.*

Vasilevskiy completely supported Zjukov.

Stalin took his map with the location of the Supreme Command's reserves, and intensively and for along time looked at it. Zjukov and Vasilevskiy moved from the table to the side, and very quietly talked about the necessity to find some other decision.

- And what "other" decision? -suddenly lifting his head, asked Stalin.*

"I never sought,-Zjukov stated,- that Stalin has such a sharp hearing. We approached the table. Stalin continued:

- I suggest that you go to the General Headquarters and think over good what is necessary to undertake in the Stalingrad region. From where and what troops is possible to relocate for the enforcement of the Stalingrad Front. Parallel to that think over about the Caucasian Front. Tomorrow at 9.00 in the evening we will meet here again.*

"The entire next day,- Zjukov continues,- Vasilevskiy and myself worked in the General Headquarters. We concentrated our attention on the possibility to prepare an operation of a large scale keeping in mind not to waste the reserves already prepared (or being prepared) for small particular operations. In October 1942the formation of our strategic reserves was supposed to be completed. To that time our industry significantly increased the production of aircraft of the latest designs and ammunition for the artillery.

After analysis of all possible versions, we decided,-Zjukov continues,- to propose to Stalin the following plan of actions: first - by means of active defense to continue to wear out the enemy; second - to start the preparation to the counteroffensive with the purpose to inflict on the enemy such a blow in the Stalingrad region, which would sharply change the strategic situation in the South of the country in our favor.

With regard to a detailed plan of the counteroffensive, we, naturally, could not prepare detailed calculations within one day. However, we clearly understood that the main

blows would have to be inflicted on the flanks of the enemy's Stalingrad' group of troops, which had been covered by the Romanian troops.

Approximate calculations showed, that to prepare the required forces and means for the counteroffensive before the middle of November would be impossible. By evaluation of the enemy we concluded that the Fascist Germany is already incapable to execute its strategic plan of the 1942. The forces and means, which by fall of 1942 had been in Germany's possession, had not been enough for the completion of the tasks neither in the Northern Caucasus, nor in the region of the Don River and Volga River.

Everything, which the German Command could use in the Caucasus and in the Stalingrad region, had already been to a significant extend worn out and bleed white. Nothing more significant the Germans obviously could introduce here. And they would be forced, as it had been after the defeat near Moscow, to turn to defense on all directions.

We knew,- Zjukov continues,- that the most combat-capable in the wermaht 6th Army under the command of Paulyus and the 4th Tank Army under the command of Got, involved into wearing out combats in the Stalingrad region, are not capable to complete the operation of capturing the City.

The Soviet troops in deadly combats with the enemy on the approaches to Stalingrad, and later in the City itself, experienced great losses and with the forces in their possession at the moment could not defeat the enemy. However, we had been near completion of large strategic reserves, containing the most modern weaponry and combat machinery. By November 1942, the Supreme Command had to have in its possession mechanized and tank formations with highly combat-capable and maneuverable tanks T-34, which would allow giving our troops more complex tasks.

In addition, our high level commanders had learned a lot during the first period of the war, and became masters of operational and tactical art in the fight with a strong enemy. The Soviet troops have hardened their strength and adjusted to methods of combat actions in any situation.

The General Headquarters studied the strong and weak qualities of the German, Hungarian, Italian and Romanian troops. The troops of the satellites had been worse equipped, less experienced than the German troops, and insignificantly combat-capable even in defense.

The situation of the enemy had also been worsened by the fact that in the region of Volga and Don they had little troops in operational reserve - not more than six divisions, stretched on a wide front. To concentrate them in one fist in a short time had been impossible. Another positive factor in favor of the Soviet troops had been the operative configuration of the entire front of the enemy: our forces possessed an embracing position and could relatively quickly unfold in the regions of Serafimovich and Kletskaya.

After the analysis of the above information,-Zjukov concludes,- we had been ready for the report to the Supreme Commander.

In the evening Vasilevskiy called Stalin and reported that we are ready, as it had been ordered, to arrive at 21.00. Stalin said that for some time he would be busy, and would accept us at 22.00. At 22.00 we arrived in Stalin's office.

After greeting us Stalin indignantly said:

- *Tens hundreds of thousands of Soviet people are sacrificing their lives in the fight with the Fascism, while Churchill is haggling because of twenty "hurricanes". Their "hurricanes" are junk; our pilots do not like that aircraft.*

And then with an absolutely calm ton, without any transition continued:

- *What did you make up in your mind? Who will report?*
- *Whoever you will order,- answered Vasilevskiy,- we have the same viewpoint.*

Stalin approached to our map.

-What do you have here?- he asked.

-Those are preliminary items of our plan of the counteroffensive in the Stalingrad region,- Vasilevskiy explained.

- *What is that group of troops in the Serafimovich region?*

-That is a new front. It is necessary to create it in order to inflict a powerful blow on the operative rear of the enemy's group, acting in the Stalingrad region.

-Do we have now enough forces for such a large operation?

"I reported,- Zjukov continues,- that, according to our calculations, within 45 days we will be able to provide the operation with required forces and means and well prepare it".

- *Isn't it better to limit the operation with a blow from the North to the South and from the South to the North along the Don?- asked Stalin.*

-No, in that case the Germans would be able to quickly turn their armor-tank divisions and to beat off our blows. On the contrary, the blow of our troops Western of the Don would not let the enemy to quickly make the maneuver because of the river obstacle and to approach against our forces.

- *Don't we overestimate our possibilities with the blow groups?- Stalin asked.*

Vasilevskiy and myself,- Zjukov continues,- explained that the operation consists of two major stages: 1) burst of the defense, surrounding the German group of troops of Stalingrad and creation of a strong outside front with the goal to isolate that Group from the outside forces; 2) annihilation of the surrounded enemy and cancellation of any attempts of the enemy to get out of the surrender.

- *It is necessary to analyze the plan in more detail,- Stalin said.- As for now the main task is to hold on Stalingrad, and not to allow the advancement of the enemy in the direction to Kamyshin.*

Poskrebyshev entered into the office and reported that Eryomenko is calling. After the completion of the phone conversation, Stalin said:

- *Eryomenko reports that the enemy is pulling to the City tank formations. Tomorrow it is necessary to expect a new blow. Give an immediate order about immediate transfer over the Volga the 13th Guardian division of Rodimtsev from the reserve of the Supreme Command, and take a look what else could be directed there tomorrow,- Stalin said to Vasilevskiy.*

Stalin then turned to Zjukov and ordered:

- *Call Gordov and Golovanov so, as they would immediately involve aviation into the battle. In the morning let Gordov attack in order to bind the enemy. Yourself fly back to the troops of the Stalingrad Front and start to study the situation in the Kletskaya and Serafimovich region. Vasilevskiy in a couple days would have to fly out to the Southern-Eastern Front to Eryomenko to study the situation on his left wing. The conversation about the plan we will continue later. Whatever we discussed here for the time being nobody, excepting the three of us, must know.*

Within an hour Zjukov flayed out to the Headquarters of the Stalingrad Front.

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FROM PRIME MINISTER STALIN TO PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL

1. I have to inform You that our situation in the Stalingrad region changed to the worse since beginning of September. It appeared that the Germans had great reserves of aviation, which they concentrated in the Stalingrad region and achieved a doubled superiority in the air. We had lack of fighter aircraft for the protection of the land forces. Even the most courageous troops appear to be powerless when they are not covered up in the air. We especially need "Speedfiers" and "Aircobras". All of that I told in detail to Mr. Wilky.

2. The transports with weaponry arrived in Arhangel'sk and are being unloaded. This is great help. However, because of lack of tonnage we could temporarily give up some sorts of help and in such a way to reduce the necessity in tonnage on the condition that it will be increased the help in the fighter aviation. We could temporarily give up our requests for tanks and artillery weaponry, if Britain and the USA together would be able to provide us with 800 fighters monthly, out of which approximately 300 from Britain and 500 - from USA. Such help would be more effective, and it would improve the situation on the Front.
3. The information of Your intelligence that Germany produces monthly no more than 1300 military airplanes is not being confirmed by our data. According to our data, the German aviation plants together with the plants in the occupied countries for production of details for airplanes produce monthly not less than 2,500 military plans

3 October 1942

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Received 9 October 1942

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PRIME
MINISTER Mr. WINSTONE CHURCHILL TO PRIME MINISTER
STALIN

In addition to paragraph one of my message from 30 September I advise You, that, as my latest data shows, the accomplishment of the German plans regarding the transportation of ships to the Caspian Sea via railroad had been stopped.

77

Received 9 October 1942

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PRIME
MINISTER Mr. WINSTONE CHURCHILL TO PRIME MINISTER
STALIN

1. We will start the offensive in Egypt at the end of this month, and the operation "Torch" will start at the beginning of November. Those operations would have to ether

- a) force the Germans to relocate air and land forces for the counteraction to our offensive, or
 - b) force them make it up with the new situation, which appeared as a result of our successes, which then, because of the threat of offensive on Sicily and South of Europe, would lead to diversion of their forces.
2. Large forces will perform our offensive in Egypt. 'Torch' will be a large operation, in which beside the USA navy, will participate 240 British military ships and more than a half a million men. All of that is unavoidably moving ahead.
3. The President and myself wish to send British-American forces to Your Southern Flank so that they would be acting under the strategic control of the Supreme Soviet Command. Those forces would include: the British - 9 Fighter squadrons and 5 Bombarding squadrons; the Americans - one group of heavy bombers and one transport group. We gave an order about formation and dislocation of those forces so that they would be ready to battles at the beginning of the New Year. The larger portion of those forces will come from Egypt as soon as they will be excused from the battles, which, as we assume, are going to be successful fore us.
4. In the letter, which Mr. Mayskiy passed to me on 5 October, You asked about a significant increase in delivery of Fighter aviation to Russia from England and the United States. We will send, as soon as it will be possible, via the Persian Gulf 150 "Speedfiers", and additionally will be sent spare parts equivalent to 50 airplanes. Those planes will be sent as soon as they will be received, as a special enforcement, which we would not be able to provide the second time. That special enforcement is being provided, above and over the Protocol about Deliveries, along the Northern way because this way can be used. President Roosevelt will advise by a special telegram regarding the United States' portion.
5. I experienced a great relief regarding the fact that such a significant part of the last convoy safely arrived in Arhangel'sk. That success had been achieved only because in that operation had been used not less than 77 military ships. The protection by Navy will not be available again until the completion of our upcoming operations. When the export ships, required for the "Torch", would be excused, they again could be provided for the Northern waters.
6. However, meanwhile we intend to do everything possible to direct deliveries to You via the Northern way by sending separate ships instead of accompanied convoys. It has been taken care to send ships separately from Iceland between 28 October and 8 November in the moonless period. 10 our ships are in preparation in addition to what the Americans will send. The ships will follow separately with intervals of about 200 miles, and in some cases with larger intervals, and will relay on maneuvering and spreading out.
7. We hope top restart the flow of deliveries by convoys with strong escort in January 1943.
8. Of course, it would significantly help You and us, if it would be possible to deprive the possibility for the Germans to use airdromes in the Northern Norway. If Your headquarters would be able to compose a good plan, the President and I would immediately consider the possibility of participation in its accomplishment to the limit of our resources.

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Sent 13 October 1942

**ANSWER of PRIME MINISTER STALIN to THE MESSAGE OF
PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL**

Your message of 9 October received. Thank You.

I. STALIN

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Received 19 October 1942

**Top Secret and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill
To Mr. Stalin**

I would have to additionally inform You that each of the 150 "Speedfiers" is armed with two guns and four machine guns.

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Received 5 November 1942

**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Winston Churchill
To Mr. Stalin**

1. I promised to inform You when our army in Egypt will attain a decisive victory over Rommel. Now General Alexander reports that the front of the enemy is broken and the enemy is retreating in the western direction in great disorder. In addition of the troops on the main theater of the battle there are six Italian and two German divisions in the desert southern to our troops, attacking along the shore. This is a formation has in its possession significant means of transport and supplies, and it is possible that in the nearest days on the enemy will be inflicted a very heavy loss. In addition, the only way for retreat for Rommel is along the coastal road, which is now stuffed with troops and transport, and which is being constantly attacked by our significantly superior Air Force.

2. Top Secret. Only for You personally. "Torch" will unfold in the very nearest future on a very significant scale. I assume, that political difficulties, regarding which You expressed Your anxiety, have been resolved satisfactorily. The military side of the operation is being developed exactly according to the plan.

3. I want very much to start as soon as possible to send to Your Southern Flank twenty British and American squadrons. President Roosevelt completely agreed, and now there is no danger of any catastrophe in Egypt. However, before anything can be done, it is necessary for our and Your officers to have a detailed agreement regarding the landing areas, etc. Please, advise me as soon as possible, how would You like to

organize those meetings. The number of squadrons, intended for shipment, had been indicated in my telegram of 9 November, in accordance with which we conduct those preparations, which can be accomplished, before our agreement.

4. Let me express to You, Prime Minister Stalin, and to Mr. Molotov our congratulations on the occasion of forever glorious defense of Stalingrad and with regard to the decisive defeat of the second Hitler's campaign against Russia. I would be glad to find out from You, how is Your situation in the Caucasus.
5. All the best wishes in connection with Your celebration.

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Sent 8 November 1942

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Your message received 5 November.

I congratulate You with the successful development of the military actions in Egypt and express confidence that now it will become possible to finish up the demolition of Rommel's bands and his Italian allies. We here relay on Your successes in accomplishment of the "Torch" operation.

I express my thankfulness for Your information that You and President Roosevelt decided to send to Our Southern Front 20 British and American squadrons in the nearest future. Fast arrival of the 20 squadrons will be a very valuable help. With regard to the required meetings and development of corresponding measurements in that connection by representatives of the British, American and our aviation, such meetings is best of all to conduct first in Moscow, and then, if required, directly in the Caucasus. I am already informed that the USA is sending for that purposes General E.E. Edler. I am waiting for the information about who is being assigned on the British side.

The situation on our Caucasian Front somewhat worsened in comparison with the situation in October. The Germans managed to capture Nal'chik City and approach to Vladicaucas, where currently are going on large battles. Our weakness here is the lack of fighters' aviation.

I am expressing my gratitude for Your wishes in connection with the anniversary of the USSR.

XXVII. My "escapes" - food hunting

... The "market place" near the camp was the main source of life for the surviving prisoners. As long as they had had what to exchange for food, they would be alive unless being killed by diseases or by the camp guards. As soon as their belongings exhausted, the prisoners would stay alive just for a short time before dying of starvation...

... I found a couple places in the barbed wire fence, where I could crawl out of the camp on my back, or on my belly between the ground and the barbed wire. This was a blessing. In the morning, I would wait until the Ukrainian guards (especially Smetana and the sharp-nosed murderer) would pass by the "market place", and then I would crawl out of the camp. Here was a "world of opportunities". And one would have to use it as quickly as possible to escape death because the camp guards could return any minute.

One of the opportunities were semi-deteriorated vegetables, which the Ukrainians would separate from the good-ones and drop them on the ground when emptying their sacks. Potatoes, carrots, beets, turnip, cabbage, onion, parsley, garlic, corn - everything was a treasure. I would grab those treasures immediately as they would be dropped on the ground. Some time, the person, who dropped those treasures, seen me picking them up from the ground, would add a couple good vegetables and say a good word...

... Another "opportunity" was begging. But this was rarely successful: the Ukrainian peasants had been coming to the camp to get some things in exchange for their produce, and not with charity intentions...

... Still another "opportunity" was stealing. When the owner of the produce would look aside, or be involved in the "exchange operation", one could grab a couple potatoes, carrots, or even an apple, and quickly drop them into his beg, especially if this person could do it invisibly and calmly. This was a dangerous proposition, since the owners of the produce were all adults, physically strong people. And if they would catch you, they could beat you, or hand you over to a camp guard with your fate already known... But often that was the only "opportunity"...

... As soon, as I would have something in my "torba" (beg), I would crawl back through the life-saving passage between the ground and the barbed wire... My aunt would prepare a soup from those treasures, or we would eat some of them raw...

... I was becoming increasingly skillful in escaping from the camp and returning into it, and also in taking advantage of the "opportunities". I also found another quick way to

return from outside into the camp. This was a very important element of survival, as it will soon be proved.

... The fence with the barbed wire was attached to one-story one-room building. That building, in turn, had been attached to the camp's wall. In the wall, next to this building, was a narrow forged-steel gate, slightly taller than the wall. The top portion of the gate was of an intricate design. But it could be used like a ladder to climb over the gate. Of course, the gate was always closed and locked, and nobody knew if it was ever unlocked and open.

I tried a couple times from inside the camp to climb to the top of the gate. I found that I could do it fast and without any trouble. Then, from time to time, I started to use this gate to quickly return into the camp...

Stalingrad Battle: Zjukov/Vasilevskiy proposed and developed a plan for demolition of the Nazi troops

Elsewhere in the world, the days of September 13, 14 and 15 had been for the defenders and population of Stalingrad overwhelmingly difficult. The enemy, ignoring everything, step by step had bursting through the ruins of the City closer to Volga. It seemed that just in a moment the people would not be able to withstand. But as soon as the enemy started to attack, the glorious fighters of the 62nd and 64th armies directly shoot them down. The ruins of the City became a fortress. However less and less forces had remained.

The turning point in those critical, and as it seemed in times, last hours, had been generated by the 13th Guardian division of A.I. Rodimtsev. After the transfer to Stalingrad, that division immediately counterattacked the enemy. The blow of that division appeared to be completely unexpected for the enemy.

On September 16, 1942 the Rodimtsev division captured back the Mamaev Height. Great help to Stalingrad had been the blows of the airforce under the command of A.E. Golovanov and S.I. Rudenko, and also the attacks and artillery shootings from the North of the Stalingrad Front directed to the 8th army corps of the Germans.

Invaluable help had been provided to the 62nd and 64th armies of the Southern-Eastern Front by the fighters of the 24th, 1st Guardian and 66th armies of the Stalingrad Front and also by the pilots of the 16th Air Army and the Air Force of Remote action...

...At the end of September 1942, Stalin had called G.K. Zjukov to Moscow again for the detailed consideration of the plan of counteroffensive near Stalingrad. A.M. Vasilevskiy had also returned to Moscow and had been present at the meeting, during which it had been decided to rename the Stalingrad Front into Donskoy Front under a new

Commander K.K. Rokossowskiy. The Southern-Eastern Front had been renamed into Stalingrad Front.

After detailed consideration of the plan of the counteroffensive near Stalingrad, Stalin referring to Zjukov, said:

- *Fly out back to the Front. Take all the necessary measures in order to wear out and blood whiten the enemy. Check out once again the regions of future concentration of the reserves in accordance with the Plan and initial regions for the Southern-Western Front and the right wing of the Stalingrad Front... Comrade Vasilevskiy must go with the same purpose to the left wing of the Southern-Eastern Front and there to study all the items, incorporated into the Plan.*

After detailed studying in the field all the conditions for preparation of the counteroffensive, Zjukov and Vasilevskiy returned to the Supreme Command, where the Plan of the counteroffensive had been once again discussed and after that approved. G.K. Zjukov and A.M. Vasilevskiy had signed the map-Plan of the counteroffensive. "Approved" signed Stalin.

Stalin said to Vasilevskiy:

- *Without uncovering the essence of our Plan, it is necessary to interrogate the Commanders of the Fronts regarding their further actions.*

Stalin ordered Zjukov to personally instruct the Military Council of the Donskoy Front regarding the actions of its troops to provide the most possible help for Stalingrad. "Responding to my instructions,- Zjukov recalls,- not to stop active actions so that the enemy would not be able to relocate forces and means for storming Stalingrad, K.K. Rokossowskiy said that the Front had very little forces and means, and that nothing serious here we would be able to achieve. "I had been of the same opinion,- Zjukov continues.- However without providing active help to the Southern-Eastern Front (now the Stalingrad Front) not to fall the City had been impossible".

On October 1, 1942,- Zjukov recalls,- I returned to Moscow for further work on the Plan of the counteroffensive. From Stalingrad to Moscow I flew in the aircraft of General A.E. Golovanov, who personally piloted the plane. I had been pleased to get into the cabin of such an experienced pilot.

Right before Moscow, I felt that the aircraft is turning around and going down. I decided, Zjukov continues,- that we missed the direction. However, after a couple minutes A.E. Golovanov safely landed the aircraft in an unknown to me area. "Why did you land the aircraft here?- I asked Golovanov. "We should be thankful that we appeared near an airfield, otherwise we could just drop down". "What is the matter?",-I asked. "Ice-covering",- was the answer. During that conversation, my aircraft, which flew behind, approached us. And on it I came to the Central Moscow Airport...

Another time, -Zjukov recalls,- our aircraft had been, again, in an almost catastrophic situation. The flight was, again from Stalingrad to Moscow. The weather had been non-flying. Moscow advised that the city is covered with fog, and the visibility is very limited. But it was necessary to fly: Stalin called.

At the approach to Moscow the visibility was less than 100 meters. The pilot received a command from the branch of navigation of the Air Forces to land on a spare airfield. In that case we would surely be late in Kremlin, where Stalin had been waiting for us.

I accepted the full responsibility and ordered the pilot E. Smirnov to land at the Central Airport. At that time I was in the pilot's cabin. Flying over Moscow, we suddenly noticed in 10-15 meters from the left wing an industrial chimneystack. I looked at Smirnov, and he - without even a blink - elevated the aircraft, and 2 -3 minutes later lead the plane for landing.

-It seems that we happily went through a situation which is called "the deal is a stack!",- I said after the landing.

- *Everything can happen in the air when the pilots ignore the weather conditions,- he answered with a smile.*
- *It is my fault! - I said to the pilot, and firmly squeezed his hand. Smirnov was a glorious man and a highly experienced pilot. We spent together in the air over 130 hours.*

In October 1942, into Stalingrad, in accordance with the decision of the Supreme Command, had been transferred over six completed divisions because practically nothing was left from the old personnel of the 62nd Army. Somewhat had been enforced the Donskoy Front. The Supreme Command and the General Headquarters had given special attention to the newly created Southern-Western Front.

Severe battles continued in Stalingrad City and in adjacent areas. Hitler required from the Command of the "B" Group of armies and from the Commander of the 6th Army Paulyus to capture Stalingrad in the nearest future.

For a decisive storm the German Command, back in September removed from the defensive wings the German troops and replaced them with Romanian troops. That sharply weakened their the comb-ability in the regions of Serafimovich and Southern to Stalingrad.

In the middle of October 1942 the Germans unfolded a new offensive hopping this time to finish with Stalingrad. But again, as before the enemy faced a persistent offensive of the Soviet forces. Especially fiercely and skillfully fought the 13th Division of A.I. Rodimtsev, 95th Division of V.A. Gorishniy, 37th Guardian Division of V.G. Zjoludev, 112th Division of I.E. Ermolkin, the Group of S.F. Gorohov, 138th Division of I.I. Lyudnikov, the 84th Tank Brigade of D.N. Beliy.

Day and night continued the battles in the streets, buildings, factories, on the banks of the Volga River - everywhere. The Soviet troops, experiencing great losses, had been left on little "islands" of Stalingrad.

In order to help Stalingrad, on October 19, 1942 the troops of the Donskoy Front turned to the offensive. The Germans had been forced once again to take from the storm of the City a large part of the airforce, artillery and tanks, and turn them against the offending Donskoy Front.

During the same time the 64th Army inflicted a blow to the flank of the attacking enemy. At the beginning of November 1942 the enemy tried a few times to liquidate in the City separate "islands" of defense. On November 11, 1942 the enemy once again tried to offense, but without a result.

During the period between July and November 1942 in the battles in the region of Don, Volga and Stalingrad the enemy lost up to 700,000 men, over 1,000 tanks, over 2,000 guns and mortars, up to 1,400 airplanes.

The Soviet troops on the Don River possessed advantageous positions, which would provide initial location for the counteroffensive of the Southern-Western and Donskoy Fronts. To the South of Stalingrad the 51st Army conducted a special counterblow and kicked out the Germans from the lakes area, and firmly hold on an advantageous position Sarpa-Tsatsa-Barmantsak. That region, on the recommendation of A.M. Vasilevskiy had been selected as initial for the November counteroffensive for the left wing of the Stalingrad Front.

More than three months lasted severe battles for Stalingrad. These battles appeared to be a colossal school of victories for the Soviet troops. The Command and Headquarters obtained a large practice in organization of interaction of the infantry, tanks, artillery and airforce. The troops had learned to conduct a persistent defense in cities, combining it with maneuvering on the flanks. The moral of the Soviet troops had significantly improved. All of that together prepared positive conditions for turning of the Soviet troops into counteroffensive.

Messages ## 82 - 86 (November 8,1942 - November 14, 1942) between Prime Minister Stalin and Prime Minister Churchill

Those messages contain mostly information concerning the military operations of the British troops in Northern Africa. Stalin informed Churchill about the upcoming counteroffensive of the Soviet troops on the Stalingrad Front.

Sent 20 November 1942

Personal and secretive message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Stalin informed Churchill about the start of counteroffensive of the Soviet troops in the Stalingrad region

88

Top Secretive and Personal message from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

Churchill expressed satisfaction with the development of the personal relationship between him and Stalin. Churchill informed Stalin about sending a convoy of 30 ships on 22 December. A major part of the message is concerned with involvement of Turkey into the war on the anti-Hitler coalition side. Churchill informed Stalin about his agreement with President Roosevelt to send to Moscow two high-ranking officers from each country for development of joint military plans for 1943. Churchill confirms the good news about the Soviet counteroffensive near Stalingrad and sends best wishes.

24 November 1942

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XXVIII. The long knife of the camp guard Smetana

... The summer of 1942 was in full force. In spite of that, more and more prisoners were dying mainly because of starvation since very few items were left for exchange, which would introduce any value for the Ukrainian population of the areas, surrounding the camp...

The number of participants in the "market place" on both sides of the barbed wire fence was decreasing, especially during the middle of the week. At such conditions it was

becoming increasingly difficult to get any food by available to me means. In addition, some times a couple boys would be hunting for food at the same time...

In addition, my competition - the newcomers (as I called them) - would often disturb the delicate "balance" of the "market place" atmosphere by desperate and inappropriate and "immature" actions...

All of that lengthened the time, which I would have to spend outside the camp in order to get at least some food. What would take before a half of an hour to an hour (I really did not know, how much time it was passing unless I would ask somebody with a watch), now would take twice as much time, or even longer. I could feel it through my heart beating: the longer I would remain outside the camp, the more uncomfortable I would feel, and the more fear I would have to suppress before leaving this deadly-dangerous place and returning into the camp...

All the senses of my little body had been stretched and stressed to their limits. Getting into the hands of Smetana or somebody alike him meant an extremely painful agony and death...

Sometimes, in a desperate attempt to get some food, I would become less careful, and would move away from the fence or the wall of the camp further, than I would "normally" do.

... Once, when I was outside the camp in the "market place", and I was about to finish my food hunting for that day, all of a sudden I got "hit" by a "wave of danger". Something told me, that I am in danger, and need to immediately escape into the camp.

I started to intuitively move toward the wall, and, at the same time, to look around. Almost immediately I noticed the camp guard Smetana, approaching the "market place" on a bicycle.

He already noticed me with my beg, and now was pedaling toward me full speed. He pulled out with his right hand his long knife, which was attached to his belt. I was not far away from the steel gate. In a split second, I covered the distance to the gate, and, like a bullet, flied up to the top of the gate, and then made it down to the safety...

During those seconds, I could see Smetana's fierce muzzle. I heard the knife's impact and gritting over the gate. Just a few centimeters divided my body from the long knife of Smetana, which could pierce me through...

On the ground in the camp, out of the immediate deadly danger, my heart - once more! - had been celebrating a little victory. A little Victory of Life over Death...

End of the First Period of the Great Patriotic War: results and balance of Forces

Elsewhere in the world, in the middle of November 1942 with the defensive battles in the Stalingrad and Northern Caucasus regions comes to the end the first period of the Great Patriotic War. By November 1942 the enemy's troops occupied a huge territory - about 1 million 800 thousand square kilometers of the USSR, where before the war had been residing about 80 million people. Many millions of Soviet people, caught by the war, had been forced to leave their places in order not to be left under the enemy's occupation. The Soviet troops, as a result of military situations, had been retreating into the depth of the country experiencing significant human and material losses. However, in those hard times the Soviet people and their armed forces did not lose the belief in the possibility to crash the enemy's hordes.

During first 16 months of the war the enemy's troops on the Soviet-German front, facing persistent resistance of the Soviet troops and the people in the occupied regions, experienced colossal losses. By November 1942 those losses reached over two and a half million men killed, wounded and missed in action. Those had been the best personnel of the German troops, which, at the end of the first period of the war, the Fascist Command already did not have with whom to replace.

On the other side, thanks to the titanic efforts of the Soviet people, the Soviet troops received satisfactory quantities of contemporary tanks, aircraft, military and non-military equipment. In 1942 the Soviet industry produced over 21,000 combat airplanes, over 24,000 tanks, at the end of the year had been unfolded the production of self-propelled artillery guns.

Workers of the rear of the Soviet Army had performed a titanic job. During the 1.5 year of war the volume of military transports over the railroads totaled 6 millions 350 thousands wagons. The Soviet troops received over 113 thousand wagons of ammunition, about 60,000 wagons of weaponry and technical stuff, over 210,000 wagons of fuel-lubricating materials. Automotive transport units only in 1942 transported 2,700,000 men, 12.3 million tones of supplies, 1923 tanks and 3674 guns. The military-transport aviation delivered over 532,000 men including 158,000 wounded.

In October 1942 became clear that the German Command would be forced to turn to strategic offensive along the entire Eastern Front. Hitler's troops experienced colossal losses, and to that time totally lost its offensive possibilities.

On the other hand it had becoming more clear the increasing power of the USSR, its successful overcoming of economical and military hardships.

By the beginning of November 1942 the Germans have had on the Soviet-German Front 266 divisions with a total of 6.2 million men, about 51,700 guns and mortars, 5080 tanks and storming guns, 3,500 combat airplanes.

To that moment the acting forces of the Soviet Union included 6.6 million men, 77,800 guns and mortars, 7,350 tanks, 4,544 combat airplanes. In the strategic reserve of the Supreme Command by that time had been accumulated 27 infantry divisions, 5 separate tank and mechanized corps, 6 separate infantry brigades.

The advantage of the Soviet forces could be traced also in the fact that they had learned to keep in deep secret their intentions, to conduct on a large-scale misinformation and to lead the enemy into error. Hidden regroupings and concentrations of forces allowed inflicting unexpected blows to the enemy.

After WWII Fieldmarshal Yodl', the former Chief of Headquarters of the German Military Forces acknowledged that they could not uncover the concentration of the Soviet Forces against the left flank of Paulyus' Army.

The Germans could not uncover the preparation of a large counteroffensive in the Stalingrad region where it had participated ten infantry armies, one tank and four airforce armies, a number of separate tank, mechanized, cavalry corps, brigades and separate formations, 15,500 guns and mortars, 1,463 tanks and self-propelled artillery guns, 1350 combat airplanes.

89

Sent 27 November 1942

**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister
Mr. Churchill**

Thank You for Your message, which I received on 25 November. I totally share Your opinion about the great meaning of development of our personal relationship.

I express to You my gratitude for the measures, taken by You, to sending a new large convoy to Arhangel'sk. I understand that currently this introduces for You especial obstacles, particularly because significant naval operations of the English fleet in the Mediterranean Sea.

I share Your opinion and the opinion of President Roosevelt about the necessity to involve Turkey in the coming spring into war on our side. Sure, that would have a great meaning for the acceleration of the demolition of Hitler and his allies.

With respect to Darlan, it seems to me, that the Americans skillfully used him to facilitate the business of occupation the Northern and Western Africa. Military diplomacy must be able to use not only Darlans, but also the devil with his grandmother.

I read with great attention Your information that You together with the Americans are not weakening the preparations along your Southern-Eastern and Southern coast with the goal to bind the Germans in Pa-De-Kale, etc., and that You are ready to use any favorable possibility. I hope that this does not mean refusal of Your promises in Moscow to open the Second Front in Europe in the spring of 1943.

I agree with the proposition of President Roosevelt and Your wish to arrange in Moscow a meeting of representatives of the three Military Headquarters for the development of corresponding military plans in 1943. We are ready to meet Your and American representatives whenever You would like it.

In the Stalingrad operation we are having successes by the way because we get help from snowfalls and fogs, which prevent the German aviation to unfold their forces.

We plan in the nearest future to undertake active operations on the Central Front to bind here the enemy's forces and not to let him to relocate a part of those forces to the South.

90

Sent 29 November 1942

To Mr. Winston Churchill

On Your Birthday I am sending You the best wishes of strong health and successes in military undertakings in the name of the victory of our common cause.

J. Stalin

91

Received 1 December 1942

**To I.V. Stalin,
Chairman of the Council of Peoples Commissars**

Kremlin, Moscow

I am very grateful to You for Your kind message in connection with my birthday. That message was the first, which I received, and it delivered to me a great pleasure.

Winston Churchill

92

Received 4 December 1942

Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

The President is informing me that he proposes a meeting for three of us in January somewhere in Northern Africa.

That is much better than the Iceland Project which we considered in Moscow. You would be able to arrive to the desired spot within three days, I – in two days and the President – in approximately the same time as You. I firmly hope that You will agree. We have to decide in the nearest moment the problem about the best method of attack on Germany by all possible forces in 1943. That could only be decided between the heads of governments and countries together with their highly qualified experts immediately available. Only by means of such a meeting it is possible to distribute the burden of the war in correspondence with the possibilities and available forces.

93

Sent 6 December 1942

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin To Prime Minister Churchill

Your message of 4December received. I welcome the idea of the meeting of the heads of the three states to establish a coordinated line of military strategy. But, to my great regret, I will not be able to leave the Soviet Union. I have to tell, that the time now is so hot, that I can not leave the country even for one day. Now are unfolding serious military operations of our winter campaign, and in January they will not be weakened. Most probably the opposite is likely.

I am waiting from You an answer to my previous message in the part related to the opening of the Second Front in Western Europe in the spring of 1943.

Near Stalingrad as well as on the Central front the battles are unfolding. Near Stalingrad we hold in surrounding a large group of German troops and hope to complete their liquidation.

94

Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

In Your message of 27 November, and in Your message of 6 December You are specifically asking about the Second Front in 1943. I am not in the position to answer this question other than together with the President of the United States. Especially because of that reason I so strongly desired the meeting of the three of us. We both understand the serious military arguments which prevent You from leaving Russia at the time of conducting Your large operations. I constantly keep in touch with the President to be aware what is possible to do.

12 December 1942

95

Received 20 December 1942

Personal Message from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

Please accept my best wishes and my personal greetings in connection with Your birthday.

All of us admiringly are watching the magnificent offensive operations conducted by the Soviet Army.

96

Sent 21 December 1942

Personal Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Sincerely thank You for the greetings and good wishes.

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XXIX. The hunting camp guard left empty handed...

... It was becoming harder and harder to get food through "hunting" for it in the "market place". I found out (from some older boys) that there still are some other possibilities of getting food. One of such possibilities was stealing it from the gardens of the local Ukrainian population, i.e., digging out potatoes, carrots, etc. This was not a simple task for a child without a spade, or a knife.

Another obstacle, was the perspective of becoming a dog's prey. But even a greater danger than that was the possibility of being caught by the owner of the garden. This could mean, that the "intruder" could end up in the hands of a camp guard...

... Another possibility of getting some food was begging from door to door in the Pechera village. I found it out from some older boys. This was very humiliating for me. But I had very limited choices. That choice was still affiliated with the "opportunity" of becoming a dog's prey, as well as to be turned over to a camp guard. But, at least, I could not be accused of stealing, which would be the worst situation...

... I tried begging a few times with greater or smaller "success". Once, I would get something, which would kill hunger for some period of time, I would immediately return to the camp. I was also afraid to travel far from the camp in order not to be lost, and then to be found by a camp guard...

... It was one of those mornings, when I decided to go for begging. I just left the camp, and was walking along the village street, trying to decide which house looks friendly, or looking for people near their houses and trying to define if they are friendly, and if they would not turn me down.

Another thing in doing that, was the task to avoid encounters with dogs, and the following noise and other "consequences".

The street was quiet and sunny, but I felt some danger in the air. I kept walking along the street, looking for friendly faces. But it was, probably, too early in the morning, or, may be just no luck - I did not see anybody.

My feeling of a growing danger was strengthening. Suddenly, I started to hear quick foot steps behind me. I turned my head around, and noticed (on a significant distance) behind me the sharp-nosed camp guard, the "famous" sadist and murderer.

He saw that I noticed him, and lowered the tempo of his steps, pretending that he is just walking without any hurry, and I am not of any interest to him. I did not start to run, pretending that I have no reason to fear.

I was close to a corner with another street. Growing bushes surrounded the house at that corner. I turned around the corner, and started feverishly looking for a place to hide, because I knew that I have no chance to run away from the murderer...

Around the corner, in front of the house grew a very branchy tree, the branches of which lowered to the very ground. A stone-paved path led to the door of the house with the tree on the left side of that path. I decided to hide under that tree, and started to move toward it around flowers and bushes, also growing on the left side of the stone-paved path.

All of a sudden, a dog appeared on the path. I had a feeling, that this is the end of my life - in a couple seconds the murderer will turn around the corner, and the barking dog would indicate my presence...

But, all of a sudden, the black dog did not start to bark. It set down in the middle of the path. I did not have any time for thinking. My little heart was trying to jump out of my body!!! I fully recognized the deadly danger of my situation!

I moved around the bushes and flowers, and rolled my body under the tree underneath its branches, which touched the ground. During all that time, the dog did not produce even a single sound. It was sitting in the middle of the path on its back with the front legs straight.

When in a couple seconds, the murderer-guard turned around the corner, the dog was still in the same position. When the guard appeared near the path on the street, the dog started to growl, but did not move!

This was the culmination moment!!! I sought, that the guard would start to look around under the bushes and trees. Instead of that, he started to run along that street...

I waited for a while until I could not hear anymore his steps, and then came out from under the tree. The dog was still in the same position. It looked at me, like if both of us were brothers... I survived again... I left the place, thanking in my mind my friendly four-legged brother, and started to quickly move back to the camp...

Zjukov's preparation job/performance for the Counteroffensive near Stalingrad

...Elsewhere in the world, by the beginning of the counteroffensive of the Soviet Forces near Stalingrad, the enemy possessed in the South of the country the following operational-strategic situation. In the region of the Middle Don, Stalingrad and Southern over Sarpinskiy Lakes acted the main forces of the "B" Group of armies: the troops of the 8th Italian, 3rd and 4th Romanian armies, 4th and 6th tank German armies.

That group of armies included over one million men, 675 tanks and storming guns, over 10,000 guns and mortars. The quantitative correlation of forces had been practically equal excluding an insignificant Soviet advantage in tanks. The "B" Group of armies had been supported by the 4th Air Fleet and the 8th Airforce corp.

...During the preparation of the counteroffensive near Stalingrad a colossal work had been performed on the transportation of troops and material-technical means for all the fronts, especially for the Southern-Western Front. On the transportation of troops and cargo 27,000 trucks had been involved. The railroads delivered 1,300 wagons of loads daily. The troops and loads for the Stalingrad Front had been transported in exclusively

difficult conditions of the fall icefloating over the Volga River. During November 1 - 20, 1942 across the Volga had been transported over 111,000 men, 427 tanks, 556 guns, 14,000 trucks, about 7,000 tones of ammunition.

"At the end of October - beginning of November, -G.K. Zjukov is witnessing, - myself and Vasilevskiy and other representatives of the Supreme Command had performed a fundamental amount of work in the troops to help the commanders, the headquarters and the troops to completely accommodate the Plan of the counteroffensive and the methods of its performance.

During the accommodation of the Plan in the Headquarters of the Southern-Western Front, -Zjukov continues, - in addition to myself had been presented other Supreme Command representatives: for artillery - General N.N. Voronov, for airforce - Generals A.A. Novikov and A.E. Golovanov, for armor-tank forces - General Ya.N. Fedorenko, who helped to deeper accommodate the questions of application and interaction of the most important kinds of troops.

On November 4, 1942 in the Headquarters of the 21st Army had been conducted a consideration of the preparation to the offensive of the 21st and 65th Armies. To that meeting had been invited the Command of the Donskoy Front and the 65th Army. A.M. Vasilevskiy during those days worked in the troops of the Stalingrad Front, checking the preparedness of the 51st, 57th and 64th armies.

Working in the troops, we studied in details the data about the enemy, character of their defense, location of their main forces and general system of fire, presence and location of the anti-tank means and defensive points.

In the morning of November 10, 1942, - Zjukov continues, - in accordance with my preliminary agreement with Vasilevskiy, I came to the Command Station of the 57th Army for the final work on the Plan of the offense of the Stalingrad Front. To that time, in addition to the Military Council of the Front, had been present: M.M. Popov, M.S. Shumilov, F.I. Tolbuhin, N.I. Trufanov, Commanders of corps V.T. Vol'skiy and T.T. Shapkin, and other generals of the Front. Prior to the meeting, Vasilevskiy, myself and the Commanders of the 51st and 57th Armies Trufanov and Tolbuhin and other generals had attended and observed the arias of troops of their armies where it was supposed to unfold the offensive of the main forces of the Stalingrad Front.

After reconnaissance, had been considered the items of interaction of the Stalingrad and Southern-Western Fronts, the method of meeting of the vanguard units in the Kalach region, interaction of the units after completion of the encirclement and other problems of the incoming operation.

After that, -Zjukov continues, - had been considered the plans of each army which had been reported by the Commanders of the armies and corps. In the evening on November 11, 1942 I reported to Stalin:

- During two days I worked by Eryomenko. Personally observed the enemy's positions in front of the 51st and 57th armies. In details worked out with the commanders of divisions, corps and the armies Commanders the incoming tasks on "Uran". The revision showed: better goes the preparation to "Uran" by Tolbuhin...

I ordered to conduct a combat intelligence, and on the basis of the information received to make more precise the plan of the combat and the decision of the army commander. Popov works not bad and knows his business.

Two infantry divisions, given by the Supreme Command to Eryomenko, as of now had not been loaded since up to now did not receive transport and horses. Out of mechanical brigades as of now arrived only one.

The business with the supply and transportation of ammunition goes bad. The troops have very little shells for "Uran". The operation would not be prepared to the planned time. Ordered to prepare for November 15, 1942.

It is necessary to immediately supply Eryomenko with 100 tones of antifreeze, without that it would be impossible to throw the mechanical units ahead; as soon as possible to send the 87th and 315 infantry divisions; to immediately deliver to the 51st and 57th armies winter cloth and ammunition with the date of delivery not later than November 14, 1942.

Konstantinov (G.K. Zjukov's pseudonym).

November 11, 1942. #4657 "

Zjukov further recalls: "... Stalin usually paid appropriate attention to the airforce support of operations. After receiving my report concerning unsatisfactory preparation of the airforce support of the upcoming counteroffensive, the Supreme Commander send to me the following telegram:

" To comrade Konstantinov.

Since the airforce preparation to the operation by Eryomenko and Vatutin is unsatisfactory the operation would be a failure... The operation against the Germans is possible to win only in the case of our superiority in the air. In that case our aviation must accomplish three tasks:

First - to concentrate the actions of our airforce in the region of the offensive of our Blow formations, to depress the airforce of the Germans, and to firmly cover up our troops.

Second - to burst the way for our offending troops by systematic bombing of the facing German troops.

Third - chase the retreating troops of the enemy by systematic bombing and storming actions to finally disperse them and not to let them to fasten on the nearest frontiers of defense.

If Novikov thinks that our airforce is now not capable of accomplishing those tasks, it would be better to delay the operation for a while and to accumulate more airforces.

Talk to Novikov and Vorozheykin, explain to them that matter and let me know your combined opinion.

Vasiliev (Stalin's pseudonym)

November 12, 1942, 4.00 a.m. #170686".

#97

**Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister W. Churchill to
Prime Minister Stalin**

1. We are deeply encouraged by the growing dimensions of Your victories. They prove everything You told me in Moscow. The results, really, may be far reaching.
2. On the Tunisian protuberance the countries of the axis are keeping their positions. I hope that the army of General Alexander will capture Tripoli at the beginning of February. It is possible that Rommel will retreat in the direction to the Tunisian protuberance with his forces which include approximately 70,000 German troops and the same quantity of Italians. Two thirds of all troops include administrative-supplying units...
3. The December convoy P.Q. so far, all of a sudden, is moving without accidents. I took certain measures to send a full convoy of 30 or more ships in January, but it is still not decided whether those ships will follow in one or in two convoys.
4. I am informing You only that soon I am going to visit President Roosevelt to coordinate our plans for 1943. My principal goal is to make sure that the British and the Americans would enter into battles with the enemy in the largest quantities and in the nearest future. I will inform You what will happen.

30 December 1942

#98

Sent 5 January 1943

**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister
Churchill**

Both of Your messages received. Thank You for the information about the coming-up conversation between You and the President. I will appreciate keeping me informed about the results of that conversation.

#99

**Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Churchill to
Prime Minister Stalin**

1. The December convoy already successfully passed with battles, and You, probably, received detailed information about the successful battle of our light forces against overwhelming forces of the enemy.
2. The Admiralty intended to send the January convoy in two parts each containing 15 ships with the departure of the first portion of the convoy approximately by 17 January, and the second – later the same month. Since the experience of the latest convoy shows that the enemy is trying to prevent from motion the following convoys by application of above water forces, it will be necessary to immediately enforce our escorts above limits, which had been originally foreseen for January. Even more significant enforcement will be necessary for the following convoys because of the day longevity increase.
3. Because of that we must reconsider our actions. Instead of sending our January convoy in two parts, we are sending 17 January 19 ships (including two tankers) instead of 15 as originally had been foreseen. After that, approximately by 11 February will be sent a full convoy with 28 – 30 ships. Following that we will make everything possible to send approximately by 10 March a convoy containing 30 ships. But this will depend on the American help with escort ships. If they will not provide this help, the aforementioned convoy will be able to leave not earlier than 19 March.

11 January 1943

100

Sent 16 January 1943

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Your message of 11 January this year received. Thank You for the information. Operations of our troops on the fronts against the Germans so far are going not bad. We are completing the liquidation of the surrounded group of German troops near Stalingrad.

#101

Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Mr. Stalin

We dropped on Berlin last night 142 tons high-explosive and 218 tons of incendiary bombs.

17 January 1943

102

Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Mr. Stalin

During the attack last night we dropped on Berlin 117 tons of high-explosive and 211 tons of incendiary bombs.

18 January 1943

103

Sent 19 January 1943

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Churchill

Thank You for the information regarding successful bombing of Berlin during the night of 17 January. I wish further successes the British Aviation, especially in bombing Berlin.

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XXX. My nights in Pechera

... I have had a little space on the concrete floor in our barrack. That triangular space was formed by the always open internal door (leading outside the barrack), and the adjacent wall. This space was my "bedroom". The "bedroom" was not long enough to

accommodate even my little body. When I would lay down on the floor in this "bedroom" and stretch out my legs, they would stick out from my "bedroom"...

... I did not have any cloth or shoes, excepting torn trousers and a winter coat, which I wore on my naked body. I slept in that winter coat, and covered myself with it while sleeping... It was totally covered inside with lice - there were no showers for the prisoners in the camp. Lice ate my body so, that I could not sleep at all during the nights! This was a torture!!!

I was forced to through out my winter coat. Now, I slept practically naked on the concrete floor behind the internal door...

... I made efforts not to move from the place, which my body had already warmed up. In spite of the fact, that even in the summer, when the nights were relatively warm, the concrete floors remind cold...

...Frequently, in the middle of the night, I would wake up by barking dogs, weapon shots, and then long lasting horrible shouts from outside of the camp... That had been the results of the "dedicated work" of camp guards and sadists like Smetana. Those sadists would catch prisoners, who tried to escape from the camp, and beat them to death with whips, or pierce the escapees with their long knives... The dogs would get their share of the hunt...

... The shouts were so horrible, that I would hardly be able to fall asleep after hearing them, and trying - unwillingly - to imagine what happened to the victims of the sadists. Hearing all of that, and imagining what was happening, was an unimaginable torture... My brain and my entire soul was on fire...

Some time, if, after that torture, deadly tired and exhausted, I would still fall asleep, people, on their way out of the barrack for their natural needs, would step on my legs in the dark. And I would wake up with bruises and pain in my legs. Some time my legs would be swollen for a few days because of the night "accidents", and I would not be able to move, or at least to move fast enough, so that I would go for food hunting...

Zjukov and Vasilevskiy report to Stalin the details and preparedness of the Soviet Armed Forces to the Stalingrad offensive operation

Elsewhere in the world, after working out the preparation in accordance with the plan of the Stalingrad Front, Zjukov and Vasilevskiy called Stalin and told him that they need to personally report a number of considerations, connected with the upcoming operation.

In the morning of November 13, 1942 they had been in Stalin's office. Stalin was in good mood and was asking in fine details about the situation near Stalingrad during the

preparation of the counteroffensive. "The main items of our report, -Zjukov recalls, - had been focused on the following.

In the areas of our major blows (Southern-Western and Stalingrad Fronts) are in defense basically Romanian troops. According to captives, their general combat-ability is not high. In the quantitative aspect, we would have a significant advantage if to the moment of the beginning of the offensive the German Command would not regroup their reserves. So far no regrouping had been uncovered by our intelligence. The 6th Army of Paulus and the 4th Tank Army are now located in the Stalingrad region, where they are banded by the forces of the Stalingrad and Donskoy Fronts.

Our formations, in accordance with the Plan, are concentrating in assigned areas, and, as it seems to be, the enemy's intelligence had not uncovered their regrouping. We took measures to even more secretive relocation of our forces and means.

The tasks of the fronts, armies and military formations had been mastered by practice. Interaction of all kinds of weaponry had been coordinated in the field. The meeting of the troops of the Blow Groups of the Southern-Western and Stalingrad Fronts foreseen by the Plan, had been mastered by practice with the Commanders, Headquarters of the fronts and armies which are supposed to come out in the region village Sovietskiy-Kalach. In the airforce the preparation would be accomplished not earlier than on November 15, 1942.

Versions of development of the internal front of encirclement of the enemy's Stalingrad Group and the external front to secure the liquidation of the encircled enemy could be considered mastered.

Delivery of ammunition, fuel and winter cloth is being somewhat delayed. However, there are all the basis to count that by the end of November 16 - 17 those material means would be delivered to the troops.

The counteroffensive operation could be started by the troops of the Southern-Western and Donskoy Fronts on November 19, 1942, and the Stalingrad Front - a day later. The difference in the dates had been explained by the fact that the Southern-Western Front had more complex tasks. In addition that front was supposed to cross the Don River.

"The Supreme Commander, - Zjukov continues, - had been listening attentively. Observing how he slowly started smoking his pipe, smoothing out his mustaches, and did not - even once - interrupt our report, it was seen that he is satisfied. The fact itself of conducting such a large counteroffensive operation meant that the initiative is being transferred to the Soviet Forces. We all believed in the success of the upcoming counteroffensive, the results of which could be significant for the liberation of our motherland from the German Fascists.

While we have been reporting, in Stalin's office gathered the members of the State Defense Committee and some members of the Politburo. We had been asked to repeat the

main items, which had been reported in their absence. After a short consideration the Plan of the counteroffensive had been completely approved.

Vasilevskiy and myself, - Zjukov continues, - pointed out to Stalin that the German Supreme Command, as soon as their situation in the Stalingrad and Northern Caucasus regions would worsen, would be forced to transfer a part of their forces from other regions, particularly from the Vyas'ma region, to help their Southern Group. In order to prevent that, it is necessary to quickly prepare and to conduct an offensive operation in the region Northern to Vyas'ma, and first of all to crash the Germans in the region of Rzjev. For that operation we proposed to involve the troops of the Kalinin and Western Fronts.

-This would be good,- Stalin said. - But who of you would conduct that business?

Vasilevskiy and myself had preliminarily agreed on that matter. Because of that I said:

- The Stalingrad operation is already prepared in all aspects. Vasilevskiy can takeover the coordination of the actions of the troops in the Stalingrad region, I can takeover the preparation of the Kalinin and Western Fronts.*

Stalin agreed with our proposition, and said:

- Fly out tomorrow morning to Stalingrad. Check out again the preparedness of troops and Command for the operation.*

On November 14, 1942 I was again in the troops of Vatutin, and Vasilevskiy - in the troops of Eryomenko. Next day I received from Stalin the following telegram:

"To comrade Konstantinov.

Strictly personally.

The day of relocation of Fedorov and Ivanov (the day of offensive of Vatutin and Eryomenko) you may set on your own, and then to report about it after the return to Moscow. Should you come up with a thought that some of them should begin the relocation one-two days sooner or later, I empowering you to decide that matter on your own.

Vasiliev.

*13hrs 10minutes
November 15, 1942."*

After discussing with Vasilevskiy, we set the date of turning to the offensive of the Southern-Western Front and the 65th Army of the Donskoy Front for November 19, 1942, and for the Stalingrad Front for November 20, 1942. The Supreme Commander approved our decision.

On November 17, 1942, - Zjukov continues, - I had been called to the Supreme Command for the development of the operation of the troops of the Kalinin and Western Fronts.

Received 27 January 1943

From President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

1. We have been consulting with our military experts and took a decision regarding operations which have to be undertaken by American and British armed forces during the first nine months of 1943. We want to inform You immediately about our intentions. We assume that those operations, together with Your powerful offensive, may, perhaps, force Germany to get on its knees in 1943. It is necessary to do everything possible to reach that goal.
2. We do not have any doubts, that the proper strategy for us is to concentrate all the forces on the task of defeating Germany with the goal of achieving a fast and decisive victory on the European theatre. Simultaneously, we must keep sufficient pressure on Japan with the goal to maintain the initiative in the Pacific Ocean and in the Far East, to support China and prevent the Japanese from spreading their aggression over other theaters, as, for instance, Your coastal provinces.
3. Our basic desire is to distract significant German Land and Military-Air forces from the Russian Front, and to direct into Russia maximal flow of supply. We will not stop in front of any efforts in order of sending to You material help in any case and by all possible ways.
4. Our immediate intention is to clean-up Northern Africa from forces of countries of the axis, and to create Navy and Military-Air basis in order:
 - to open a reliable way through the Mediterranean Sea for the military transport and
 - to start intensive bombarding of important objects of axle countries in Europe.
5. We made a decision to undertake wide combined operations of Land and Navy Forces in the Mediterranean Sea as soon as possible. Preparation to those Operations is being currently conducted, and is affiliated with concentration of Significant forces, including landing units and ships in Egypt and in Northern Africa ports. Above that we intent to concentrate in the limits of Great Britain significant American land and air forces. Those forces together with the British will get prepared to land in Europe as soon as it will become possible. Those concentrations most certainly will be known to our enemies, but they will not know where, when and with what size of forces we intend to conduct a blow. Due to that they will be forced to disperse the land as well as the air force along the entire coast of France, Netherlands, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Levant, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Crete and Dodekanian islands.
6. In Europe we will increase by fast rates the bombarding offensive of the allies from Great Britain against Germany, and by the middle of the summer the power of this offensive will double in comparison to the current. Our current experience

showed that daylight bombings result in annihilation of large quantities of German air fighters. We assume that the increase of the number of air attacks during the day and night and the total weight of the dropped bombs will lead to a very significant material and moral damage in Germany and will quickly exhaust the German fighter air force. As You know, we are already binding more than a half of Germany's air force in Western Europe and on the Mediterranean Sea. We have no doubts that our enforced bombarding offensive together with other operations which we conduct will lead to further distraction of German air and other forces from the Russian Front.

7. Our intention on the Pacific Ocean is to kick out the Japanese from Rabaul in the nearest few months and after that to develop the success in the general direction to Japan. We also intend to increase the scale of our operations in Burma with the goal to reopen this way for supply of China. We intend to immediately increase our air force in China. However, we will not allow our offensive against Japan to negatively influence our ability to use any possibility for inflicting on Germany a decisive defeat in 1943.
8. Our major goal is to inflict on Germany and Italy on land, sea and in the air a maximal quantity of armed forces, which can be physically applied.

XXXI. The SS "guests"

The Pechera extermination camp, as other such camps in Transnistria, was under the Romanian administration. The camp's commandant was under Marshal Antonescu's direct supervision, executing the Marshal's orders.

However, the German Nazis would show from time to time who the real boss is.

... Once, early in the morning, we - the camp prisoners, had been ordered to gather at the camp's central plaza, and to put our belongings in the middle of the plaza.

Exhausted women, elderly and children started to move to the plaza, dropping their things into a growing hill of items. The Romanian guards, who "supervised" the "operation", then directed the prisoners along alleys, and ordered us to sit down on the ground.

In a while, the alleys of the camp had been filled by prisoners, sitting on the ground. Soon after that (we could see through the forged gates of the camp), trucks painted in black with swastikas, started to stop outside the camp.

The trucks had been loaded with SS troops, dressed in black uniforms. Soon after that, the SS troops moved into the camp.

They went from one barrack to another, and around the entire camp, looking for hidden prisoners. Here and there, we started to hear gun shots. The prisoners, who tried to hide in the barracks, or in other places in the camp, had been murdered cold-bloodedly wherever the Nazis found them...

... After the first round of the execution, the Nazis formed groups, and started to move from both ends of each alley, along the prisoners, sat on the ground.

The Nazis moved slowly along the prisoners, checking out if there was any jewelry, or treasurable items left on the prisoners.

When found - the jewelry was skinned by the Nazis together with the lobe of the ear, or broke out together with fingers, tooth crowns knocked out together with the prisoner's teeth... In case of a slightest resistance, or delay, the prisoner was murdered on the spot...

The air was saturated with shouts and horror...

**The Cruelty of those *HUMAN-LOOKING* Nazis was WITHOUT LIMITATIONS...
A normal human being would not be able to understand what kind of animals
delivered into this world and raised all those bloodthirsty beasts of prey...**

... Near the place, where I was sitting, a large group of prisoners gathered close to each other on the ground. An SS Nazi, round like a huge barrel, with a red and sweat muzzle and neck, and a heavy belly, was trying to separate the prisoners from each other.

He was shouting, kicking the prisoners with his heavy boots, and beating them with his submachine gun. The people did not really understand, what he wanted. He hit with his gun a young woman, holding a baby in her hands. She became furious because the Nazi hit her baby. She jumped on the Nazi, and grabbed his muzzle with her nails... The beast, with the help of another beast, snatched out the baby from the hands of the young mother, and smashed the baby's head against a tree under horrible shouting of the woman...

After that the beast murdered the woman... Blood from her head was running to the side of the alley...

...Blood and corps covered the entire camp when the SS troops finally left...

Start of the Stalingrad Offensive: encirclement of the Nazi troops and closing the internal ring

Elsewhere in the world on November 19, 1942 at 7.30 a.m. the troops of the Southern-Western Front inflicted a powerful blow and burst the defense of the 3rd Romanian Army simultaneously in two places: the 5th Tank Army under command of General P.L. Romanenko from the region Southern to Serafimovich, and the 21st Army under the command of General I.M. Chistyakov from the Kletskaya region.

The enemy could not withstand the blow and started to retreat in panic or to surrender. The German formations, located behind the Romanian troops, forcefully counterattacked, but had been smashed by the 1st and 26th Tank corps introduced into the combat. The tactical burst in the area of the Southern-Western Front had been completed.

The Army Commander P.L. Romanenko had been in his best role. He was a courageous man and a highly talented commander. His character had best meant him exactly for such type of impetuous actions.

Against the 21st Army of General I.M. Chistyakov the enemy directed their reserves, including the formations of the 14th German Tank division. The 22nd German and the 1st Tank and 7th Cavalry Romanian divisions unfolded against the Soviet 5th Tank Army, and first of all against its 1st Tank corps under General V.V. Butkov command.

The 26th Tank corps under command of General A.G. Rodin inflicted a heavy defeat to the 1st Tank Division and crashed the Headquarters of the 5th Romanian corps.

With the outcome of the Soviet forces onto the operational spaces, the main forces of the Romanian Army, acting against the Southern-Western Front, and the German reserve formations, directed to save that army, had been completely demolished.

The 26th Tank corps of A.G. Rodin and the 4th Tank corps of A.G. Kravchenko impetuously advanced to the Kalach region to meet with the 4th mechanized corps of the Stalingrad Front. To the left of the 21st Army in offense had been the 65th Army of the Donskoy Front under the command of General P.I. Batov.

During the night of November 23, 1942 the vanguard unit of the 26 Tank corps under command of lieutenant-colonel G.N. Filippov captured the bridge over the Don River by a courageous raid. The enemy tried a few times to kick out Filippov's group, however without any result.

Holding on to the bridge, G.N. Filippov decided to capture Kalach with the tank detachment of lieutenant-colonel N.M. Filippenko. Two kilometers had been the distance to Kalach. N.M. Filippenko, in spite of the small amount of forces in his detachment, decided to attack the City on the run. The battle for Kalach lasted the entire night. The Germans stubbornly resisted. However, soon arrived the vanguard of the main forces of the corps, and Kalach had been captured.

For their heroic actions G.N. Filippov and N.M. Filippenko had been awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Their associates had also been awarded with medals of the USSR.

On November 24, 1942 the 21st and 5th Armies of the South-Western Front, after demolition of the encircled groups of the Romanian troops, took hostages more than 30,000 soldiers, officers and generals, and a huge amount of weaponry and military equipment.

Stalin, being seriously concerned with the actions of the right wing of the Donskoy Front, at the end of November 23, 1942 sent the following directive to that Front Commander K.K. Rokossowskiy:

"To comrade Dontsov (pseudonym of Rokossowskiy).

Copy: to comrade Mihaylov (pseudonym of A.M. Vasilevskiy)

According to Mihailov's report, the 3rd Motorized and the 16th Tank division of the Germans had been completely or partially removed from your Front, and now they are fighting against the 21st Army. That fact creates a positive situation so that all armies of your front would start active actions. Galanin is acting lifelessly. Give him an order to capture Vertyachiy not later than on November 24th.

Give a directive also to Zjadov so that he would turn to active actions and bind to himself the enemy's forces. Give an appropriate push to Batov, who at the current situation could be acting more forcefully.

I. Stalin

*November 23, 1942
19hrs 40minutes".*

As a result of successful offensive of the 21st Army of General I.M. Chistyakov and measures taken by the Command of the Donskoy Front the situation of the 65th Army improved. That army started a more energetic advancement ahead.

The 24th Army of the Donskoy Front started the offensive three days later, inflicting a blow along the left bank of the Don River. However, because of its general weakness that army did not have any significant success.

The 51st, 57th and 64th armies of the Stalingrad Front started their actions on November 20, 1942 - a day later than the troops of the Southern-Western and Donskoy Fronts.

After successful burst of the defense and defeat of the 1st, 2nd, 18th and 20th Romanian divisions and 29th German motorized division in the area of the 51st Army, it had been introduced into the break the 4th Mechanized corps of General V.T. Vol'skiy. And in the band of action of the 57th Army had been introduced the 13th Tank corps of General T.I. Tanas'chishin. Simultaneously started the actions the 4th Cavalry Corps of General T.T. Shapkin, which captured the same day the railroad station Abganerovo.

The enemy, trying to stop the 57th Army advancing to Kalach, sent in there their 16th and 24th Tank divisions. But their actions came late. In addition they did not possess anymore the power, which could withstand the powerful blows of the troops of Southern-Western and Stalingrad Fronts, which arrived with their tank formations at 16.00 on November 23, 1942 in the region of the village Sovietskiy. Here the 45th Tank Brigade of the 4th Tank corps under the command of lieutenant-colonel P.K. Zjidakov had been first to meet the 36th Mechanized Brigade of lieutenant-colonel M.I. Rodionov from the 4th Mechanized corps.

After crossing the Don River, the 4th Tank corps of the Southern-Western Front under the command of General A.G. Kravchenko and the 4th Mechanized corps of the Stalingrad Front under V.T. Vol'skiy met in the region of the village Sovietskiy, and closed the ring of encirclement of the enemy between the Volga and Don rivers.

After that the 64th, 57th, 21st, 65th, 24th and 66th armies obtained the opportunity to develop the offensive in the general direction to Stalingrad, squeezing the internal ring of the encirclement of the enemy.

1st Guardian Army, 5th Tank Army of the Southern-Western Font and the 51st Army of the Stalingrad Front, enforced with tank formations, chasing the retreating enemy, received the task to kick to the West the defeated formations of the enemy as far as possible from the encircled near Stalingrad group, and to create a firm outside front, required for the successful liquidation of the encircled enemy.

That concluded the first stage of the counteroffensive.

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Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Prime Minister Stalin

Between President Roosevelt and me had been agreed that I will propose the President of Turkey to meet with him in order to take actions for better and faster fit out of the Turkey army keeping in mind possible events in the future. The President of Turkey answered that he is cordially greeting that plan of increase of “general defensive security” of Turkey and that he is ready, if I wish so, that our meeting would be publicized in the appropriate time after the meeting.

You already know my view point on that matter from the telegrams that we exchanged, and You may be confident that I will fast and immediately inform You.

Please accept again the expression of my delight with the amazing exploits of the Soviet armies.

27 January 1943.

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Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Mr. Stalin

I would appreciate if You would not refute any rumors, arriving to You, that I am, again, going to Moscow, because it is important, that my actual movements, which I informed You about, would be in secret within a few days.

With all the best wishes.

29 January 1943

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Sent 30 January 1943

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. Churchill and President Mr. Roosevelt

Your friendly joined message I received 27 January. Thank You for the information regarding the decisions, made in Casablanca, related to operations which are to be conducted by American and British armed forces during the first nine months of 1943. Understanding the accepted by You decisions in relation to Germany as a task of her defeat by opening the Second Front in Europe in 1943, I would be thankful to You for the information about concrete planned operations an that area and the dates of their conduct.

With regard to the Soviet Union, I can assure You, that the armed forces of the USSR will do everything possible to continue the offensive against Germany and her allies on the Soviet-German Front. We think to finish our winter campaign, if the conditions would allow, in the first half of February of the current year. Our troops are tired, they need rest, and it is doubtful that they will be able to continue the offensive beyond that date.

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Sent 31 January 1943

**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister
Mr. Churchill**

Your message regarding the upcoming meeting with the President of Turkey received. I will be thankful to You for the information regarding the results of that meeting, the importance of which I understand.

Your wish about not refuting rumors regarding Your trip, of course, will be satisfied.

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XXXII. The night guides. I am ready to go...

... I heard a few times about escapes from the camp. And the midnight barking and horrible shouting had been the best proof that this was true.

Some prisoners would rather prefer to be killed by the camp guards, than die from starvation and diseases... But there was a chance for survival, which would give courage to the camp prisoners...

... Later, it would become known, that escapes from the camp would be organized and executed in many cases by youngsters as young as 15 - 17 years old, practically children, who would manage to return to the camp a few times to help a few groups of prisoners to escape. Some time those guides would pay the ultimate price - their lives, for their courage and goodness... All of that would become known later... But now...

... Now, it was one of those cold late fall days, when my legs were bruised and swollen after night "accidents". In such days, I would not take a risk to go outside the camp for food hunting, and stayed inside the camp.

I was looking for some food, or, at least for something, reminding food...

Some of the bushes in the camp produced berries. But, I was told that some of the berries are poisonous, and I did not know which ones. I decided, that the poisonous berries must be bitter. And everything, which was sweet, or at least not bitter, was to me eatable...

So, armed with that "knowledge", I was picking and eating some berries in the bushes, when, suddenly, I overheard a few people, whispering with each other next to me.

I stopped picking and eating the berries, and started to carefully listen to the whispers. Some times, their voices would sound so quietly, that I would not be able to understand a single word.

From all pieces of their whispering I understood, that those people are going to try to escape next night (not tonight). The place for escape was also indicated. I decided to run together with them. My existence in the camp was becoming increasingly unbearable: the nights were becoming increasingly cold. And food hunting during daytime was getting more and more dangerous and less resulting...

Zjukov's Plan for annihilation of the encircled enemy near Stalingrad

Elsewhere in the world, by the end of November 1942, the ring, encircling the enemy near Stalingrad, had been firmly squeezed. The Soviet forces started the next stage, the task of which had been liquidation of the encircled Group.

"After encirclement of the 6th Army and the 4th Tank Army of the Germans,- G.K. Zjukov recalls,- it arrived the most responsible moment - not to let the enemy's troops to burst from the encirclement.

On November 28, 1942,- Zjukov further recalls,- I had been located in the Headquarters of the Kalinin Front where considered with its Command the upcoming offensive operation. Late in the evening Stalin called me and asked if I am familiar with the latest data in the Stalingrad region. I answered positively. Then the Supreme Commander ordered to think and to report to him my considerations on the liquidation of the German troops encircled near Stalingrad. In the morning of November 29, 1942 I have sent to Stalin the following telegram:

"The encircled German troops now, at the current situation, without an additional blow of the enemy from the region Nizjne-Chirskaya - Kotel'nikovo would not take a risk in order to burst and to get out from the encirclement.

The German Command, most probably, would try to hold on to their positions in the region Stalingrad- Marinovka-Karpovka. They would further try in a shortest period to

accumulate in the region Nizhne-Chirskaya-Kotel'nikovo a Blow Group to crash our front in the general direction to Karpovka with the purpose to develop (after crashing the front of our troops) a corridor to feed the troops of the encircled group, and later to bring out that group through that corridor.

... To prevent this from happening it is necessary:

- as soon as possible to throw away the Nizhne-Chirskaya and Kotel'nikovo Groups of the enemy, and to create a firm combat order on the line Oblivskaya-Tormosin-Kotel'nikovo. In the region Nizhne-Chirskaya-Kotel'nikovo to keep two groups of tanks, not less than 100 tanks in each as a reserve;

- to break up the enemy group, encircled near Stalingrad, into two parts. For that ... to inflict a breaking blow in the direction of Bol'shaya Rossoshka. To inflict a blow also in the opposite direction toward Dubinskiy and height 135. In all other areas to turn to defense and to act only involving separate units in order to exhaust the enemy.

After breaking the encircled group into two parts it is necessary ... first of all to annihilate the less strong group, and after that, involving all the forces, to inflict a blow to the Group in the Stalingrad region.

Zjukov

#02

November 29, 1942".

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**Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to
to Mr. Stalin**

1. Thank You for Your telegram about Turkey. I met with all the principal turkeys in Aden 30 January and had with them prolonged and the friendliest conversations. There are no doubts that they went closer to both of us, and also that their own information about Germany convinces them in the bad situation there. The first task is to supply them with contemporary arms, which we for now could provide only a small quantity. I made everything possible to send all they can transport over the Tavrian Railroad which is the only appropriate road, and also to loan them a few ships for transporting of a more significant quantity of supply from Egypt. I am giving them also some quantity of German arms, which we captured in the desert. We are creating in Ankara a joint English-Turkish military commission to improve the communications for transportation of military materials. We make joint planes to help them if they will be exposed to an offense by Germany or Bulgaria.
2. I *did not* ask them about any precise political obligation or promise regarding their entrance into war on our side, but, in my opinion, they will do it before the

end of this year. Probably, before that, through wide interpretation of neutrality, similarly to that as the United States did, they will allow us to use their airfields to fuel our air planes to conduct attacks of British and American bombers against oil sources in Ploeshty, which have a life important meaning for Germany, especially now when Your Armies returned Maikop. I repeat that I did not ask and did not get any specific political obligation and told them that they can announce so. However, their meeting with me, their position as a whole and the joint communiqué, the text of which I am sending to You via telegraph, involve them more openly than before, into anti-Hitler system, and precisely so will it be accepted in the entire world.

3. They are, of course, concerned with the situation, in which they will appear after the war because of the great power of the Soviet Union. I told them that, based on my experience, the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics never breached any obligations or agreements, and that now has arrived for them the time to conclude a favorable agreement, and that the most reliable place for Turkey – is the place near the victorious, as for a fighting country, near the table of a peace conference. All of that I said based on our joint interests, in accordance with our alliance, and I hope that You will approve this. I am sure that they would respond to any friendly gesture of the Union of the Soviet Socialistic Republics. I would be very glad to receive Your sincere opinion regarding all those problems. I established very tight personal relationships with them, especially with the President Inenyu.
4. In Your recent telegram, which You sent to President Roosevelt, You asked about deceleration of the allies operations in Northern Africa. With regard to British 8th Army, since then we occupied Tripoli and Zuara, and hope in the near future to enter with significant forces into Tunis, and kick-out the enemy from the positions Mareta and Gabesa. The clean-up and restoration of the port in Tripoli is in whole swing. But currently the lines of our communications extend to Benghazi and partially even to Cairo having a length up to 1600 miles. Our 1st Army, enforced by significant units of American Armed Forces, is pooling-up its rears, and as soon as it will become possible will turn to offensive together with the 8th Army. Rainy weather is a serious factor, as the communications are, which, whether railroads or highways exist in small numbers and their total length is 500 miles. However, I hope that the enemy will be totally annihilated or driven away from the African coast by the end of April, or maybe even before that. According to my own evaluation, based on reliable information, the 5th German Tank Army in Tunis has 80 000 Germans and together with them from 25 000 to 30 000 Italians. Rommel possesses 150 000 Germans and Italians from which, perhaps, only 40 000 are combat units, but they are poorly armed. Annihilation of those forces is our immediate task.
5. I will answer You later on Your absolutely justified questions, directed to me and to the President regarding specific operations, with regard to which decisions had been made in Casablanca.
6. Please, accept my congratulations with regard to Field marshal Paulus's capitulation and with regard to the end of the 6th German Army. This is really an amazing victory.

1 February 1943

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**Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill
To Mr. Stalin**

I was asked to tell if You had been beforehand informed about the British-Turkish meeting. I think, I should answer "Yes, Prime Minister Stalin had been totally informed". In the alternative case You could make an announcement in Moscow. In the last case You may not consulting with me because I am sure that everything You would say would be useful.

2 February 1943

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XXXIII. The Escape

... I told my aunt and cousins, that there is going to be an escape, and that I am going to run with other prisoners. I asked them, if they would join the escapees. My aunt said that they are not ready for that. They blessed me and said, that if I would survive - I would tell people about their fait...

... Long before it became dark, I hid myself close to the indicated place of the upcoming escape. I waited for a long time. It became very dark. I did not hear any noise of movement, or voices, or whisper. I almost lost hope to escape, and was ready to return to my "bed" on the concrete floor behind the internal door in our barrack...

... Suddenly, I heard a noise of somebody, carefully moving in the darkness through the bushes. And then again, and again, and again...

One by one, the escapees started to gather. The guide counted them all, and headed up the hillock, which at that place rose to the very stone fence, so that it was not hard to climb the fence there.

I followed the other escapees. My eyes became used to the dark, and I could distinctively see the escapees, moving through the darkness.

I climbed the wall, carefully laid down on the top of the wall underneath of the barbed wire, turned around, and holding on with my hands on the wall, hung over the wall my body outside the camp. Then, I released my fingers, and fell down to the ground into a ditch.

I hit hard my legs, and then my elbows and my back. But I, practically, did not feel any pain, because my mind was pre-occupied with the sound, produced during the impact against the ground...

It was very frightening to hear as other escapees were falling down and hitting the ground... Each fall sound like an explosion of a bomb...

... Each moment I expected to hear the sound of a siren, barking dogs, running and shooting guards, screaming and agonizing voices of victims... It did not happen at that time...

... After the last fall-"explosion", we stood still for a few moments in the near-wall ditch, outside the camp. Then, after a short quiet whistle from the guide (which reminded a sound of a small animal), the escapees ran across the road, and started to run over a ploughed field, directing to the left edge of the field, covered with trees and bushes.

It was very painful for me to run over that field - I had cut my bare-legged feet over clods of the ploughed hardened soil, and twisted my feet in addition to the bruises and injuries from the recent night "accidents"...

Finally, we ran into a forest. In the forest, the guide stopped, and started to count the escapees. He asked them, to who I belong. He found out that I did not "belong" to anybody. However, they did not drive me away...

It was quiet in the forest. The guide was leading the escapees with confidence through the darkness: he, apparently, knew his way... And I did not feel any fear. Everybody kept quiet.

I followed the group of escapees until fatigue and pain in my bleeding feet overcame me... At that time, we approached the edge of the forest, and had been moving along some forest road. The group stopped for a short rest - the people were exhausted...

I set down on the ground near a tree, totally exhausted and falling asleep... A young crescent of the moon showed up from behind the clouds. Suddenly, a voiceless noise appeared on the road. The escapees immediately hid behind the trees. The guide was watching from behind a tree close to the road.

The approaching noise appeared to be from a horse-wagon, driven by a woman. The guide stepped out from behind the tree, and quickly approached the horse-wagon. He asked something the woman, and she shook her head in agreement. After that, the guide gave me a sign to come to the horse-wagon. He told me, that the Ukrainian woman would give me a ride to the village Krasne, where she lives. And from there, I could go to the nearest shtetle, which still had a Jewish population...

The youngster thanked the woman, said to me "good luck", and the horse-wagon set out...

... We arrived at the woman's yard before sunrise. There was nobody in her house. A high wooden fence had surrounded the yard. The yard was covered with a fruit-trees garden.

The woman was very gentle, and nice to me. Her name was Maria. She gave me a washbasin with warm water. I washed my face, neck, and hands. And she helped me to wash my injured feet. This was a divine pleasure. She gave me some food, and then hid me on a Russian oven, where I instantly fell asleep...

... When I woke up, Maria told me that I slept without waking up, a day and a half...

Next day, very early in the morning, Maria hid me in her horse-wagon, and drove me out of the Krasne village. After driving a few kilometers, she stopped the horse-wagon, showed me the direction, and said if I follow that direction, I would come to a Jewish shtetle Shpikov. I thanked her. She turned around her horse-wagon, and we went in opposite directions...

Stalin: "Now it is not the time to feel heart"

...In December, 1942 the State Committee of Defense had been considering further actions, and first of all - near Stalingrad.

Stalin proposed:

- *It is necessary to transfer the managing of the defeat of the encircled enemy into the hands of one person. Now the actions of two Commanders of fronts negatively interfere with each other.*

The members of the State Defense Committee in attendance at that meeting supported that proposition.

- *What Commander are we going to assign the final liquidation of the enemy?*

Somebody proposed to transfer all the troops under the command of K.K. Rokossowski.

-Why do you keep quiet? - Stalin referred to Zjukov.

- In my estimation both commanders are worthy,- Zjukov answered. - Eryomenko, of course, would feel hurt if the troops of the Stalingrad Front would be transferred under the command of Rokossowski.*
- Now it is not the time to feel hurt,- Stalin cut off, and ordered Zjukov:*
- Call Eryomenko and declare to him the decision of the State Defense Committee.*

"After unpleasant discussions with Eryomenko and then with Stalin,- Zjukov recalls,- a directive had been issued to transfer three armies of the Stalingrad Front under the command of K.K. Rokossowski."

According to the directive of the Supreme Command of December 30, 1942, to the Donskoy Front from the Stalingrad Front had been transferred the 57th, 62nd and 64th armies.

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Sent 6 February 1943

Personal Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill

2 and 3 February I received Your messages regarding the Turkish problem. Thank You for the information regarding the negotiations with the Turkish leaders in Aden.

1. With regard to Your remark that the Turks would respond to any friendly gesture of the Soviet Union I think it is pertinent to remind that on our side in relation to Turkey as for a few months before the Soviet-German war so after the start of that war it has been made a number of announcements the friendly character of which is well known to the British Government. The Turks had not reacted to those steps, being probably afraid to aggravate the Germans. It may be assumed that the Gesture proposed by You will meet on the Turkish side a similar reaction.

The international situation of Turkey is pretty delicate. On one side, Turkey is banded with the USSR by an agreement of friendship and neutrality, and with Great Britain – with an agreement of mutual help for resistance to aggression, and on the other side Turkey is tied with Germany with an agreement of friendship, signed for three days before Germany's invasion into the USSR. I do not know how Turkey is thinking in the current conditions to superimpose the fulfillment of its obligations to the USSR and Great Britain with its obligations to Germany. However, if the Turks are willing to make their relationships with the USSR friendlier and closer, let them announce it. The USSR in that case is ready to cooperate.

On my side, obviously, there will be no objections against Your declaration that I have received from You information regarding the British-Turkish meeting while I cannot call that information complete.

3. I wish all the possible success in the upcoming offensive of the 1st and 8th British armies and American troops in Northern Africa, and fast kick-out of the German-Italian troops from the African coast.
4. Please accept my thanks for the friendly congratulation regarding the surrender of Field Marshal Paulus and successful completion of liquidation of the enemy's troops encircled near Stalingrad.

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XXXIV. My "journey" to Mogilyov-Podol'sk

... The morning, when I said "goodbye" to Maria, was very cold and bracing. And my feet, which did not yet fully recovered from the cuts and bruises, were stepping over the well rammed field road with hope.

The road finally brought me to a shtetle called Shpikov. It was still morning time. And I was standing in the middle of a little plaza, paved with stones. At this early hour, just few people could be seen here and there on the plaza.

I tried to attract attention to myself of the Jews on the plaza.

Finally, a Jewish man approached me. He was looking for somebody, who could join a group of men in a minyan for a prayer. It was obvious, that there was a shortage of Jewish men in Shpikov. The man asked me, where I came from. I explained to him in

short my situation. He said, let's go first for the minyan, and then I would be taken care off.

We went to the synagogue/prayer house, and joined the rest of the group. They all were adults, twice as tall as myself. It was warm and nice inside the synagogue. And my bare feet started to warm up a little bit. They gave me an yarmolka and a tales, which covered my entire body down to my feet... I had a strange feeling, being covered with the tales - some good warmth was coming from it to my body - I felt like I am covered with a shield...

... After the minyan, I repeated my story in more detail to the group. I also told them, that I would like to return to Mogilyov.

They said, that I am too weak to travel on my own. And, that I would, probably, need to stay in Shpikov until my wounded legs would heal, and my health would significantly improve... They also said, that sometime somebody may travel by a horse-wagon in the direction to Mogilyov. So, it may be a chance, that I may get a ride in that direction...

...Later, that day, I was given shelter by a Jewish couple. They gave me a wash-basin with warm water, in which I washed my head with kerosene to get rid of lice, and then I washed my entire body... What an unimaginable pleasure this was!!!

Ester (that was the name of the woman in this house) cleaned the wounds on my legs with alcohol, and placed on them some very strongly smelling crème. She also wrapped the wounds with bandages.

... First time for so many months I felt in relative safety! It was warm in the house. Ester's husband - Moyshe - was a furrier. The Ukrainian population from the surrounding villages provided him with sufficient amount of work, so there was no shortage in food. And, in spite of the bad times, Moyshe was well respected by his customers... That reputation gained him some sort of illusive "protection" from the local Ukrainian gendarmes, who also used his services (for free)...

...A few weeks later, after my feet had been healed, and Ester removed from them the bandages, I was allowed to get out of the house into the backyard for a short time in the morning. I was told, that it is better for me (and my patrons) to stay inside the house, so that I would not generate any suspicions... A few days later after that, another family gave me a shelter...

... One day in the morning, Avruum - the person whom I first met in Shpikov, came to the house, in which I was sheltered, and told me, that next day his Ukrainian acquaintance is going by horse-wagon to a shtetle called Shargorod, which is in the direction to Mogilyov. And he agreed to give me a ride to Shargorod...

... I slept overnight in Avruum's house. And early in the cold morning next day, the horse-wagon stopped near Avruum's house. Avruum gave me a piece of bread, and

wished me luck. I thanked him, lay down at the bottom of the horse-wagon, covered myself with hay, and we left...

... On the way to Shargorod, every time, when a vehicle, coming in the opposite direction, would approach our horse-wagon, my new patron Petro would tell me to completely hid in the hay. He said, I need to do it because I look unmistakably Jewish, especially my curly head...

Twice we had been stopped: first time by Ukrainian gendarmes, and the other time by a truck with Romanian soldiers.

The horse-wagon had toll sides and large wheels. So, in order to inspect the content of the horse-wagon, one would have to get on it.

One of the four gendarmes asked Petro: "What do you carry?". "Hay for my horse" was the answer. The gendarme pulled his long knife, and pushed it into the chink between the wooden boards of the sidewall of the horse-wagon. The knife almost pierced my neck...

I quietly moved away from the point of the knife. The gendarme moved the knife to the right and to the left to make sure that he did not missed anything... It was very scary to hear the gendarmes' voices in a hand stretch from me...

I knew, that one slightest careless move could cost me my life, and, almost definitely, Petro's life too...

... The second time, we had been stopped by a truck with a squad of Romanian soldiers... The story repeated. Only this time, a couple of the soldiers pushed their knives through the chinks of the side boards of the horse-wagon... I scarcely survived this time again...

I had been relentlessly hunted by Nazism - the Bloodthirsty beast of Hatred and Greed - even they did not know where and who I am...

... In Shargorod, Petro stopped near a prayer house/synagogue, and told the man, who opened the door, about my situation. I thanked Petro, and he left. The clergy- man invited me inside the synagogue. It was dark here, but warm. And I could stretch my legs, and breath freely, sitting on the floor, after long and torturous hours of traveling, covered with hay and my knees bent...

The clergy-man told me, that I need to wait here until people would come for the evening prayer, and somebody would give me a shelter.

... In the evening, after the prayer in the synagogue, I was, again, in a warm Jewish house. And Aaron and Frima, who gave me shelter, had been feeding me, and listening to my stories, shacking their heads.

So far, Shargorod, located not on the main communication roads, avoided the fate and horrors of the other "less fortunate" little towns and cities of the Transnistria...

I told my new patrons, that I would like to return to Mogilyov. They said, that Mogilyov is now a ghetto, and this is not simple to do. But they will try to find some Ukrainian friend, who is visiting Mogilyov from time to time, and may agree to give me a ride.

...A few days later, before the sunrise, I was already sitting in a horse-wagon, between sacks with potatoes and other vegetables, moving in the direction to Mogilyov.

It was cold, and my cloth was, softly saying, "not exactly" winter-type of cloth. All my cloth was from adults, which different people gave me. I was dressed in trousers and a shirt, over which I had a coat. That was all. I did not have anything on my feet... I covered them with an empty sack while I was on the horse-wagon...

...My patron Demyan stopped the horse-wagon before Mogilyov, and said, that I would have to walk into the city. He told me how to get to the ghetto's gates, and said: "Wait until next horse-wagon will arrive at the gates, and the guard would start to check it. At that moment try to snick in between the wagon and the gates, so that the guard would not notice you, and you would not be bitten or killed". And so I did, using all my resourcefulness and skills, gained in the extermination camp "Dead Loop"...

The Second Stage of the Stalingrad offensive – Heroism of the Soviet Armed Forces

...The second stage of the battle near Stalingrad, as the first one, had been filled with courage, heroism and glorious successes of the Soviet fighters. The following event is a very typical for the period of the counteroffensive near Stalingrad.

On December 17, 1942 at 18.30 p.m. the 24th Tank corps under the command of V.M. Badanov entered into the burst made to the Northwest of Boguchar. That corps went with combats about 300 kilometers, and annihilated on its way to the railroad station Tatsinskaya about 6,700 enemy soldiers and officers, and captured a huge amount of military supply.

In the morning of December 24, 1942 that corps approached the station Tatsinskaya and attacked it from different directions. Captain I.A. Fomin with a group of fighters burst into the station Tatsinskaya and cut off the railroad Lihaya-Stalingrad. The group annihilated the enemy's guards and captured a train of dismantled new combat airplanes.

At the same time tanks under the command of captain M.E. Nechaev burst into the airport where more than 200 transport airplanes ready to fly had been located. However they never had a chance to fly again: the Soviet tanks had smashed them. Five days the

24th Tank corps hold on the station Tatsinskaya, being encircled and fighting against new reserves of the enemy.

In the morning on December 29, 1942 after the order of N.F. Vatutin, the 24th Tank corps burst the encirclement and, thanks to the courage and qualified commanding of the battle by V.M. Badanov, in complete order left Tatsinskaya. A couple days later the 24th Tank Corps already successfully attacked Morozovsk.

Taking into account the significant contribution of the 24th Tank corps into the defeat of the enemy troops in the region of Volga and Don that corps had been renamed as the 2nd Guardian Tank Corps, and his commander V.M. Badanov first in the country had been awarded Order of Suvorov II degree. Many soldiers and commanders of that corps had also been awarded with governmental awards.

During the operation of the 24th Tank Corps Stalin and Zjukov had been aware of it and extremely interested in its survival and success. Talking to N.F. Vatutin, Commander of the Southern-Western Front, Stalin, in particular, suggested:

- *Your first task - not to allow defeating Badanov, and as soon as possible, to send to him for help Pavlov and Russiyanov...*
- *Remember about Badanov..., rescue Badanov no matter what! - Ordered Zjukov during the same communication.*
- *I will do everything possible, and will rescue Badanov,- Vatutin assured.*

Successful blows of the Southern-Western and Stalingrad Fronts in the Morozovsk and Kotel'nikovo directions finally decided the fate of the encircled troops of Paulyus in the Stalingrad region.

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Received 12 February 1943

**Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill
To Mr. Stalin**

Your message of 30 January received. I consulted now with the President, and the question had been transferred into the headquarters on both sides of the ocean. I am authorized to give the following our joint response:

- a) In Eastern Tunis there is a quarter of a million of Germans and Italians. We hope to drive them out from there or to annihilate during April if not before that.

- b) After that will be done, we intend in July or before that, if it will be possible, to capture Sicily with the goal to clean up the Mediterranean Sea, facilitate to the crash of Italy with the following from that consequences in relation to Greece and Yugoslavia and to exhaust the German Air Force. Right behind that must follow the operation in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean sea., perhaps against the Dodecanian islands.
- c) That operation will require the use of the entire tonnage and all landing means, which we will be able to gather in the Mediterranean Sea, and also all troops which we will be able to prepare for the landing operations to that time. The scale of the operation will be about 300 000 or 400 000 men. We will develop to the limits any success as soon as there will be unfolded ports and bases for landing troops.
- d) We also energetically conduct the preparations, to the limit of our resources, to the operation of forcing the Channel in August with the participation of British and American units. The tonnage and the offensive landing means will be here also as limiting factors. If the operation will be delayed because of the weather or for other reasons, it will be prepared for September with the participation of larger forces. The dates of that offensive must, of course, depend on the state of the defensive possibilities which will be in the Germany's possession on the other side of the Channel.
- e) Both operations will be conducted with the support of very large Air Forces of the United States and Great Britain; in the operation of forcing the Channel will participate all Air Force of the British metropolis. All those operations will require the utmost stress of the navy resources of Great Britain and the United States.
- f) The President and I gave orders to our Joint Headquarters regarding the necessity of top speed and about enforcing the attacks to top limits of human and material possibilities.

9 February 1943

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Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Mr. Stalin

A chain of unusual victories, a link in which is the liberation of Rostov-on-Don, the information about which had been received during last night, makes me unable to find words to express to You my admiration and gratitude which we feel in relation to the Russian Arms. My most sincere wish is to do as much as I can to help You.

14 February 1943

Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. Churchill

On 12 February I received Your message regarding the upcoming British-American military operations.

1. Thank You for the additional information regarding the decisions made in Casablanca. Along with that I cannot withhold from some thoughts regarding Your message, which, as You advised, is a joint answer, expressing also the opinion of the President.

From Your information it is seen that the military operations in Tunis originally planned by You to be finished in February are now being delayed until April. There is not much need to prove how undesirable is this delay of operations against the Germans and Italians. Just at the current moment, when the Soviet Armed Forces are still managing to maintain their wide offensive, the activity of the British-American troops in Northern Africa is urgently necessary. The contemporarily pressure on Hitler on our front and from Your side in Tunis would have a great positive effect for our joint business, and would create really serious difficulties for Hitler and Mussolini. Then it would accelerate the operations which You planned in Sicily and in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea.

With regard to opening of the Second Front in Europe, in particular in France, it is, as it looks from Your information, being planned only for August-September.

It seems to me, however, that the situation requires that those dates must be maximally shortened and the Second Front in the West to be opened much earlier of the mentioned date. IN order not to let the enemy to recover, in my estimation, it is extremely important not to delay the blow from the West until the second half of the year, but to conduct it this spring, or at the beginning of the summer.

According to reliable information in our possession, the Germans during the time period since the end of December, when the actions of British-American troops in Tunis had stopped for some reason, transferred from France, Belgium, Holland and Germany itself to the Soviet-German Front 27 divisions including 5 Tank divisions. As a result instead of help to the Soviet Union by means of distraction German forces from the Soviet-German Front it appeared a relief for Hitler, who in view of weakening the British-American operations in Tunis got the possibility to transfer his additional forces against the Russians.

All of that speaks in favor of the idea that the earlier we will jointly use the difficulties existing in Hitler's camp on the front, the more chances is to expect Hitler's defeat in the nearest future. If all of that would not be taken into account now and not be used in our joint interests, it may happen that by getting a relief and accumulating forces the Germans would be able to recover. It is clear for You and us that it would be highly undesirable to allow such a mistake.

2. I considered it necessary to send this report also to Mr. Roosevelt.

3. Thank You for Your warm greetings with regard to liberation of Rostov. Today our forces liberated Har'kov City.

16 February 1943

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XXXV. I arrived in Mogilyov. The "orphanage".

... I entered into Mogilyov-Podol'sk barefoot over the snow, which was falling and converting into slurry...

I headed to the market place, and from there along the street, where the synagogue was located, and where I hoped to get some shelter.

... A passer-by stopped, looked at me, at my bare feet deepened into the snow slurry, and asked me where I am coming from, and where am I going. After I answered him, he directed me to the Jewish community place.

It was warm in that room of the Jewish community place, and I was allowed to stay there over the night. The person, who met me in that place, said "good night", locked the door from outside and went home. I slept on a wooden desk, covered with my coat - the only item of my "bedding", not to count, of course, the trousers and the shirt...

Next day, a few of us - homeless, parentless and relatives-less boys, had been gathered by Jewish volunteers in one empty room, in a non-resided part of the ghetto, so that nobody could find us, excepting those, who had been aware of that place.

Buildings around that place, and a part of the building with that room, laid in ruins. Steps lead from the street level to that room. And those steps had only a wall on one side. On the other side of the steps there was no wall, or hand-rails...

The room, in which we were gathered, had not been heated, but had had double-windows and doors. The glass in the windows had not been broken.

Jewish volunteers had placed a few close-coupled steel beds into that room, and covered them with some feather beds. All that had been collected in ruined buildings, or in

abandoned houses by Jewish volunteers... Our toilet was a steel bucket, located in the anteroom...

... Since most of us did not have any clothes or shoes/boots, we were laying naked day and night in those beds under the feather blankets, flattened ourselves against each other... Day and night we were alone... And each sound from outside - wind, or snow, or a falling piece of ice - could mean a possible deadly invasion for all of us...

A bucket of water, frozen at the top, was brought to us a couple times per week. Food was a very rare event in our existence...

Our group contained about 8 - 10 boys, depending on how many were dying and the number of new arrivals. Two of those boys were Romanian Jews. Those boys had some friends in Mogilyov. Apparently, those friends were surviving the awful times relatively well. They were dressed in very good winter cloth and shoes. And they looked very healthy...

Twice per week (or sometime - three times per week) those friends would visit the Romanian boys and bring for them food, even cooked food - soup, mashed potatoes, casha... Their visits were a real celebration for us. We had been counting the days, and fantasizing: would they come today or tomorrow. We would listen to every single sound. But a day would pass, and nobody would come...

Of course, the main portion would go to the Romanian boys. But each of the rest of us would get from the riches a little piece, or a sip of food: it was, probably, impossible for the givers to resist the silent shout of the souls of ten pairs of eyes, burning by hunger, and by the desperate desire to survive...

Soviet ultimatum to surrendered Nazi troops and Hitler's refusal. Surrender of Fieldmarshal Paulus and his troops. End of the Great Battle near Stalingrad

... By January 10, 1943 the Donskoy Front possessed 212,000 active fighters, about 6,900 guns and mortars, over 250 tanks and up to 300 combat airplanes.

In January 1943 the outside front in the region of the Don River had been moved to the West by the forces of the Southern-Western and Stalingrad fronts by 200 - 250 kilometers. The situation of the German troops, squeezed into a circle, worsened. No perspective to save them existed. Material reserves had been exhausting. The troops had been getting a hunger ration. Their hospitals had been overloaded to the limit. Deaths from wounds and illnesses sharply increased. The unavoidable catastrophe had been approaching.

In order to stop blood shedding, the Supreme Command ordered the Command of the Donskoy Front to declare to the 6th German Army an ultimatum of surrender on generally accepted conditions. In spite on the obvious perspective of inevitable defeat, Hitler's command rejected the Soviet ultimatum and ordered its soldiers to fight to the last bullet.

On January 10, 1943 after a powerful artillery preparation the forces of the Donskoy Front turned into offensive with the goal to cleave the enemy's group and to annihilate it part by part. However they did not achieve a total success.

On January 22, 1942 after an additional preparation the troops of the Donskoy Front again turned into offensive. The enemy could not withstand that blow and started retreating. The best results in those battles had been achieved by the 57th Army under the Command of General F.I. Tolbuhin and the 66th Army of General A.S. Zjadov.

On January 31, 1943 the Southern Group of the German troops had been finally demolished. What was left from that Group together with its commander Fieldmarshal Paulyus surrendered. On February 2, 1943 the reminders of the Northern Group also surrendered. That completely concluded the greatest battle on Volga River, where a huge group of German troops and its satellites completed its existence.

"The battle in the Stalingrad region, -Zjukov wrote, - had been exclusively severe. From November 19, 1942 until February 2, 1943 had been annihilated 32 divisions and 3 brigades of the enemy. The remainder of 16 divisions lost between 50 and 75 % of their personnel.

The total losses of the enemy's troops in the region of Don, Volga and Stalingrad was about 1.5 million men, up to 3,500 tanks and storming guns, 12,000 guns and mortars, up to 3,000 aircraft and a great amount of other military equipment. Such losses of forces and means reflected catastrophically on the general strategic situation and shackled to its foundation the entire military machine of Hitler's Germany".

"The defeat near Stalingrad, - wrote German General Westfal', - throw down into horror the German people and its army. Never before during the entire history of Germany had been a case of such horrible annihilation of such a quantity of troops".

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**Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill
To Mr. Stalin**

1. I informed the Turks about Your friendly message. The Turkish Government now has authorized me to inform You that it is ready with great pleasure to start to

exchange opinions with You through corresponding Ambassadors. I assume that the Turks had a corresponding contact with Your ambassador in Ankara.

2. The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs informed our Ambassador, that exchange of opinions, as he thinks, should start as soon as possible and preferable in Moscow. He proposes to have as the starting point the conference in Aden, including the question which I mentioned earlier about air bases for attacks on Ploeshty, etc., and, if that is desirable, to foresee a publication in the appropriate time some sort of a joint communiqué.
3. Sir A. Clark Kerr is carrying to You from me a fuller information regarding negotiations in Aden. Regretfully, he is delayed for a week because of bad weather.
4. Please, advise me, if there is any question which I should raise in front of them from my name and not as one which is coming from You.

17 February 1943

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**Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill
to Mr. Stalin**

I regret very much, that I could not answer Your last telegram. It was prepared a text of the answer, but my temperature had jumped so high that I decided that it would be better to delay the answer for a while. I hope to inform You additionally in a few days about the general situation. In the mean time, the things which You are doing is simply impossible to describe. With the battle in Tunis everything is OK. The enemy is exhausted, and now he will be squeezed in the vice.

With all the best wishes.

25 February 1943

XXXVI. The death of my closest roommate.

One of the boys from Romania was positioned on my right side in our collective bed. He was actually my closest roommate. We slept with our bodies flattened against each other.

He did not speak any Russian or Ukrainian language, just knew a few Russian words. But he spoke a little bit of Idish, which I understood, and also could speak a little bit. Somehow, my friend and I managed to communicate, and we well understood each other.

My friend's name was David. He was suffering from a large boil on his chest. David was always moaning, especially during his sleep, because of the severe pain in his chest - the boil kept growing...

I knew, that every little touch or push would create in his body severe pain. I was always glad to see him falling asleep. When that was happening, I would lie calm without any motion so that I would not wake him up, even when I needed to turn to the other side, or to go to the toilet... David knew that, and always thanked me with a smile...

His adults-friends brought for him some medical cream to smear on the boil. But the boil was so sensitive, and the pain from it was so severe, that David could not use that cream...

David's body was becoming thinner and thinner, turning into a real skeleton. And his skin was becoming bluish, while the boil kept growing...

... David dyed in the middle of the night. I realized, that he is dead because he was not convulsing and not moaning anymore...

... I was trying to separate myself, and to move my body away from his body. But I could not do it: the boy on my left side (and now - behind me) would be pushed down to the floor from our brotherly bed, i.e., from the warmth under the feather blanked into the freezing temperature of our shelter...

The boy on my left was already disturbed by my movements. And, in spite of my explanation of what happened, suggested (he was older and stronger, than I), that I become calm, unless I am looking for real trouble...

It is very scary when your naked body is being pushed against a naked dead body even when that is the body of your dead friend...

... In the morning, I told the other boys, that David dyed... We carried his body from the bed, and placed it on the floor near the wall so that we would not be able to see it...

Two days later David's body was carried out from our shelter by Jewish volunteers... This was our group's first loss. We would have to get used to more losses in the future... Not only we had lost a comrade, we also lost a little source of survival...

We had to overcome this loss and to prepare for other losses. It seemed, that we managed to do it... **We NEVER overcame it...**

Results of the Stalingrad Battle. Hitler's intention to liquidate the Kursk Projection. Stalin calls Zjukov to the Supreme Command

...So, the battle for Stalingrad appeared to be the most important event of the winter campaign of 1942/1943, an event of a great international significance. From the moment of the start of the counteroffensive in November 1942 until March 1943 the Soviet Forces defeated in general over 100 enemy's divisions. Of course, those great victories did not come easy to the Soviet fighters and the Soviet people. They also suffered great losses. A total of 154,885 men had been killed and 330,892 wounded in the Stalingrad counteroffensive operation alone.

On the fronts appeared lull. And only in different areas of the Voronezh, Southern-Western and Southern fronts and on Kuban' still continued severe battles.

The German High Command, in order to prevent the worsening of the situation on the Southern flank of its front, collected additional forces, and organized a counteroffensive against the Soviet Southern-Western Front. The purpose of that counteroffensive had been to kick that front back behind the River Severskiy Donets, and then, after covering up here by a defense, to inflict a blow on the troops of Voronezh Front and capture Har'kov and Belgorod. Hitler's Command assumed that, under favorite circumstances, they would be able to widen the actions of their troops with the purpose to liquidate the Kursk Projection.

At the beginning of March 1943 the enemy inflicted a strong blow to the left wing forces of the Voronezh Front. The Soviet troops, experiencing losses, retreated. After that the enemy recaptured Har'kov and started to develop the blow in the direction to Belgorod.

"During that time,- G.K. Zjukov recalls,- as a representative of the Supreme Command I had been located on the Northern-Western Front which had been under the command of Marshal S.K. Timoshenko. The forces of that Front arrived at Lovat' River, and had been preparing to cross it.

About March 12 or 13, 1943 Stalin called on the Command Station of the Northern-Western Front. After reporting to the Supreme Commander about the situation on the Lovat' River, I pointed out that because of the early thaw the River became hard to cross. And because of that the troops of the Northern-Western Front would have to delay for a while their offensive actions.

The Supreme Commander agreed with that. After asking a few more questions regarding the possible development of events on the Northern-Western Front, Stalin in conclusion of the conversation said that V.D. Sokolowskiy had been assigned as the Commander of the Western Front.

I proposed to assign I.S. Konev, who prior to that commanded the Western Front, as the Commander of the Northern-Western Front, and sent S.K. Timoshenko to the South as a Representative of the Supreme Command to help the commanders of the Southern and Southern-Western fronts. He knew those regions. And the situation there during the last days appeared to be for our forces disadvantageous.

-Good,- Stalin said,- I will tell Poskrebyshev to advise Konev to call you, give him all the instructions, and yourself tomorrow come to the Supreme Command. It is necessary to discuss the situation on the Southern-Western and Voronezh Fronts. Perhaps,- he added,- it will be necessary for you to leave for the Har'kov region.

Some time later I.S. Konev called me.

-The Supreme Commander ordered to assign you as Commander of the Northern-Western Front instead of Timoshenko, who as a Representative of the Supreme Command will be sent to the Southern wing of our front,- I said.

I.S. Konev thanked and said that tomorrow morning he will go to the place of his new assignment".

Next morning G.K. Zjukov left for the Supreme Command.

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Sent 2 March 1943

**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister
Mr. Winston Churchill**

I received Your message of 17 February regarding the intention of the Turkish Government to start the exchange of opinions with the Soviet Government. On 24 February I received from You also transferred by Mr. Kerr three documents:

1. Summary of announcements, which Prime Minister made to President Ismet and the Turkish delegation at the conference in Aden;
2. Coordinated conclusions of the British-Turkish conference, which took place in Aden on 30-31 January 1943 and
3. Note about the post-war security.

Thank You for that information

I consider necessary to inform You that 13 February the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs announced to the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara the desire of the Turkish Government to start negotiations with the Soviet Union regarding improvement of the Soviet-Turkish relationships. The Soviet Government answered through its Ambassador in Ankara that it is greeting the desire of the Turkish Government to improve the Soviet-Turkish relationships, and expressed readiness to start negotiations. Currently it is expected the return to Moscow of the Turkish Ambassador with who it is proposed to start negotiations.

I am using this occasion to sincerely wish You complete recovery and fastest restoration of forces.

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Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to

Mr. Stalin

Last night British Air Forces dropped over 700 tons of bombs on Berlin. The attack had been pretty successful Out of 302 four-motor bombers we lost 19.

2 March 1943

XXXVII. Winter 1942-1943 - our prison. "Benefits" of the "brotherly bed"...

... The "brotherly bed" served not only as a shelter for our bodies, but also as a place for spreading diseases.

... We all suffered from severe itch, scratching our bodies to blood. This was an unimaginable torture - worse than hunger. Because of hunger, one could faint out and fall asleep. Itching would not let you fall asleep...

... Our bodies had been covered with scabs, which had been bleeding and sticking to the dirty feather beds. During the change of the position of my body, the previously formed crust would tear off, sticking to the feather bed, and the place of separation would start bleeding again. And so endlessly...

... A woman from the Jewish community was coming to our shelter to treat us from the itch. We stood naked on the icy cold floor, covering up our "private places" with our hands (we still had a sense of shame in spite of the inhuman conditions of our existence), and being poured with a solution of hydrogen sulfide. Then, soaked and wet, stinking with the awful "aroma" of hydrogen sulfide, we had been sticking to our feather beds until next evening... The frozen pieces of the solution from the floor would have to be kicked off and thrown into the "toilet"...

Meeting at the Supreme Command. Dangerous situation on the Southern-Western and Voronezh fronts. Dinner at 3.00 am in Stalin's apartment. Stalin sends Zjukov to the Voronezh Front

Somewhere else, after leaving the Northern-Western Front on March 13, 1943, G.K. Zjukov arrived the same day late in the evening in Moscow deadly tired since he traveled on a cross-country vehicle over badly demolished roads.

A.N. Poskrebyshhev informed Zjukov over the phone, that Stalin gathered a large group of people to discuss problems concerning fuel and electricity, for the metallurgical industry, and also for the plants manufacturing tanks and aircraft. G.K. Zjukov had been ordered to immediately come to the meeting. "I took some food on the move,- Zjukov recalls,- and went to the Kremlin.

In Stalin's office, in addition to the Politburo members, had been present managers of different governmental branches, designers and presidents of a number of largest plants. From their reports could be clearly seen a great stressfulness which still existed in the industry. The help promised by the United States of America in accordance with the land-lease had been arriving badly.

The meeting by the Supreme Commander ended after 3.00 a.m. All its participants went to different places: some to the Central Party Committee, others to the Gosplan, still others to different governmental branches with the purpose to find resources and to quickly take measures for the improvement of the functioning of the industry.

After the meeting Stalin approached me and asked:

- *Did you have dinner?*
- *No.*
- *Then let's go to me and at the same time we will talk about the situation in the Har'kov region.*

During the dinner,- Zjukov further recalls,- from the General Headquarters had been delivered a map with the situation in different areas of the Southern-Western and Voronezh fronts. The person, who delivered the map and had been following the situation on the Voronezh Front, reported that on that front the situation by the middle of March had extremely worsened. After the armored-tank and motorized formations of the enemy, which had been offending from the region of Kramatorsk, pushed back the units of Southern-Western Front behind the Donets River, it appeared a difficult situation for the Soviet forces to the South-West of Har'kov.

Simultaneously turned to offensive the enemy's formations from the Poltava and Krasnograd regions. N.F. Vatutin pulled back the advanced units of the 3rd Tank Army and the 69th Army, and organized more dense combat formations Western and Southern-Western to Har'kov. The Voronezh Front, then under command of General F.I. Golikov, did not perform such a pullback of their forces.

- *Why the General Headquarters did not prompt?- Stalin asked.*
- *We recommended,- answered the representative of the General Headquarters.*
- *The General Headquarters was supposed to interfere into the managing of the Front,- insistently noticed Stalin. And then, after thinking for a while turned to me: - It is necessary for you to go in the morning to the Front.*

Right away the Supreme Commander called N.S. Hrus'chov - member of the Military Council of the Voronezh Front, and sharply reprimanded him for not taking appropriate actions against the counterblowing actions of the enemy. After sending back the representative of the General Headquarters, Stalin said:

- *It is necessary, however, to finish the dinner.*

It was already five o'clock in the morning...

After the dinner, or better to say - after the breakfast,- Zjukov continues,- I asked for the permission to go to the Defense Ministry to prepare myself for the take-off to the Voronezj Front. At 7.00 a.m. I already was at the Central Airport and left for the Headquarters of the Voronezj Front. As soon as I got into the airplane I fell deeply asleep, and woke up only from a push during the landing in the airport".

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Sent 3 March 1943

**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Stalin to Prime Minister
Mr. Winston Churchill**

I congratulate the British Air Forces with yesterday's successful bombing of Berlin. I feel sorry, that the Soviet Air Forces, occupied with the struggle with the Germans on the front cannot yet participate in bombing of Berlin.

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**Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to
Mr. Stalin**

1. Because the weather did not allow conducting an air attack on Berlin, we dropped last night 800 tons on Hamburg with good results. That attack had been especially strong Keeping in mind the short time during which the bombs had been dropped. During the next few months we will methodically increase the weight of the bombs being dropped during an attack, and also the number of attacks, and I hope that the trials for the Nazis will be pretty cruel and make them in relation to war less exited than they had been up to now. In addition to creating difficulties for their production, we are forcing them to distract more and more sources for anti-air force units and other defensive undertakings.
2. Please, accept my hottest congratulations with regard to liberation of Rjev. From our conversation in August I know what special meaning You place on the liberation of that city.
3. I am consulting with President Roosevelt regarding the answer to Your telegram of the sixteenth, and I hope to direct to You soon our joint answer.

4 March 1943

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Sent 6 March 1943

Top Secretive and Personal Message from Prime Minister I. V. Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. W. Churchill

Your message with the information regarding successful bombing of Hamburg I received. I congratulate the British Air Forces and Your intentions to increase the bombings of Germany.

Thank You for the greetings regarding the liberation of Rjev by our troops. Today our troops captured Gjatsk City.

I will wait for Your and Mr. Roosevelt's answer to my message of 16 February.

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Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Mr. Stalin

468 tons of high-explosive bombs and 518 tons of incendiary bombs (a total of 986 tons) had been dropped last night on Essen at good conditions during a short time on an area of about two square miles.

6 March 1943

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XXXVIII. Chewing water...

The food, which had been occasionally brought to us by Jewish volunteers, was so rare and so little, that we would not be able to survive with its help even if we would be totally healthy. And a few of us did not survive, and died because of starvation.

One boy became crazy before he died of hunger. He would have a cup of warm or cold water, would take a sip, and would start to chew it, imagining that there is solid food in that sip. The expression on his face with almost closed eyes would make one thinking, that he is enjoying food of the finest taste...

This would drive crazy the rest of us. We would start to hallucinate, imaging that the boy is getting food for himself from an undisclosed source at an undisclosed time. This was really crazy, because the boy was in the same bed with the rest of us, locked in the same room by a key from outside...

We started to check his cup every time when he would chew (and the rest of us - not), and found nothing but water, some time with a couple pieces of ice... We understood, that he is out of his mind... Soon after that the boy died...

We understood, that none of us would survive, if this situation is going to continue. We decided to check out the market place. Next day we asked for and had been given a key to our prison by the Jewish volunteers, so that we would be able to leave it and to return to it by desire...

When the frosts would come down, we would "equip" for "hunting" (i.e., for food scouting) one of us. Each of us would give the "hunter" the best of our possessions - trousers, shoes, a jacket, a sweater, a hat...

The prey then had been equally divided between all of us...

My Pechera "hunting" expertise became highly valuable in those new conditions. Some time, when it was getting a little bit warmer outside, we would "equip" two of us with the cloth in our possession. Two "hunters" would be much more "effective" than a single one. One of the two would attract the attention of the food owner, while the other would "expropriate" some of the food into his bag...

Normally, the one, who would talk to the food owner, would propose to him some help for food... Not always the "hunting" would end up peacefully. Should the food owner notice, that he/ she is being "robbed", they would immediately start to chase the "hunter". So, that "hunter" would have to be stronger and faster of the two. The other "hunter" would still have to help the "expropriator", distracting the chaser's attention, holding up the chaser, and if "critically necessary", even to throw a stone into the chaser, but never in his head, because the chaser could be killed by that stone. And that was totally forbidden by our "code" of survival...

But we had been improving our hunting skills as well as our self-defensive skills...

Our living condition has drastically improved. Every prey was highly valuable for us - potatoes, beats (even sugar beats), carrots, reddish and horseradish, sunflower seeds, garlic, onion, buckwheat. We would give the food, which could not be eaten in raw state, to the Jewish volunteers, and they would return it to us cooked or baked.

The most valuable, along with bread and other basic food, was garlic, onion and horseradish because at that time we all had been suffering from scurvy. And we found out that garlic, onion and horseradish help to get rid of it. To some of us that knowledge came too late - they died because of scurvy...

...The winter 1942 -1943 was still very cold. Winds from the Dniester River were blowing in a desperate attempt to break the glass in the windows, facing the River, of our shelter. That would be a complete disaster for our brotherhood...

We were glad to see snow, accumulating on the windows outside, and patching the whole openings. The snow would form a crust/pillow, and would protect the glass from breaking...

...Every unexpected sound (day or night) on the steps, leading to our room (unless we heard the sound of the friendly key, turning in the doors), would generate fear in our hearts...

... We still had been treated with the awfully stinking hydrogen sulfide from it.

Struggling and suffering from everything - severe cold, fear/horror, starvation, illnesses, losses of dear friends, isolation - we survived the long - long - long 1942 - 1943 winter...

Zjukov reports to Stalin the Voronezh Front situation. N. F. Vatutin is assigned Commander of the Voronezh Front. Time for the Kursk Battle planning

...Elsewhere in the world, after arrival at the Voronezh Front, the same day Zjukov called Stalin and described the situation there. The situation at that front had been worse than what had been described by the representative of the General Headquarters during the meeting with Stalin. After capturing Har'kov the enemy's troops had been advancing in the direction to Belgorod without any significant resistance.

- *It is necessary, - Zjukov reported to Stalin, - to immediately direct to Voronezh Front everything available from the Reserve of the Supreme Command. Otherwise the Germans will capture Belgorod, and will develop the blow in the Kursk direction.*

An hour later, - Zjukov recalls, - from the conversation with A.M. Vasilevskiy I became aware that the Supreme Commander decided and already transferred a Directive to move into the Belgorod region the 21st Army, the 1st Tank Army and the 64th Army. The Tank army had been directed to my Reserve".

On March 18, 1943 a tank corps of the SS had captured Belgorod. However, further to the North the enemy could not burst open.

From a personal report of the Commander of the 52nd Guardian division General N.D. Kozin, G.K. Zjukov became aware of the following.

In accordance with the order of General I.M. Chistyakov - Commander of the 21st Army, an vanguard unit of that army under the command of G.G. Pantyuhov - Commander of the 155th Guardian Regiment had been sent to Belgorod with the goal to get into contact with the enemy and to capture captives.

On its way to Belgorod the vanguard unit noticed the enemy and organized an ambush Northern Belgorod. During the combat had been captured captives from the tank division "Dead head".

By the end of March 18, 1943 the main forces of the 52nd Guardian division took defense to the North of Belgorod, and advanced forward a combat guarding. After that the enemy tried to kick of the Soviet guardians but without any success. To the right of the 52nd Division took defense the 67th Guardian Infantry division, and to its left possessed defense the 375th infantry division.

According to the report of the Commander of the 52nd Division, in the battles to the North of Belgorod especially courageous fought the Commander of the 153rd Regiment P.S. Babich and the Commander of the 151st Infantry Regiment I.F. Yudich. On March 20, 1943 G.K. Zjukov awarded many fighters with combat awards.

On March 20 - 21, 1943 the main forces of the 21st Army organized to the North of Belgorod a pretty strong defense. Simultaneously in the region of Oboyan' had been concentrating the forces of the 1st Tank Army.

Multiple attempts of the enemy's troops at the end of March 1943 to burst open the defense of the Soviet forces in the region of Belgorod and Severskiy Donets River, where at that time unfolded the 64th Army, had been unsuccessful. The enemy experienced great losses, and after that fastened on the possessed frontier.

From that moment the situation on the Kursk arch had stabilized. Both sides had been preparing to the deciding battle.

In order to strengthen the management of the Voronezh Front, the Supreme Commander ordered to assign General-Colonel N.F. Vatutin as the Commander of that Front. After entry into that position Vatutin with attributed to him energy started to strengthen the troops of the front and to create a deeply echelon defense.

"At the end of March and beginning of April 1943,- G.K. Zjukov recalls,- N.F. Vatutin and myself visited almost every unit of the Front. Together with the commanders of units and formations we had been evaluating the situation making more precise the tasks and the required measures should the enemy turn to offensive. I had been especially concerned with the area of the location of the 52nd Guardian Infantry division. And I visited that location twice. I considered that this division would have to take on the main blow of the enemy. The Commanders of the Front and the Army shared my viewpoint. And we decided to enforce that critical area as much as possible with artillery means.

It arrived the time to prepare preliminary considerations on the Plan of the Kursk battle.

Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Marshal Stalin

1. Mr. Roosevelt sent to me a copy of his answer to Your message of 16 February. I feel pretty good to answer personally.
2. Our first task is to clean up Northern Africa from troops of axle countries by an operation the conditional title of which will be transferred in my message following immediately after this (message). We hope that that will be done by the end of April, and by that time we will bind in battles about a quarter of a million troops of the axle countries.
3. In the mean time are being energetically conducted preparations to an operation with a new conditional title "Eskimos" (look at my message following immediately after this message) in June, a month earlier than it had been planned in Casablanca.
4. Plans of operations in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea are being studied such as:
 - a) capture of Crete or Dodecanean Islands or both together and
 - b) landing troops in Greece.

Time selection for those operations to a significant degree will be defined by the result of "Eskimos" and availability of the required amount of tonnage and landing means. The help of Turkey and the use of Turkish air ports, surely, would introduce a great treasure. At the appropriate moment I will require to place that at our disposal.

5. In December British-Americans refused to capture Tunis and Biserta on the move because of the power of the enemy, the approaching rein season and the fact, that communications had been stretching by 500 miles from Algeria and 160 miles from Bon over bad roads and narrow French railroads, the movement over which requires an entire week. Delivery of supplies for the army was possible only by sea in small quantities because of frequent enemy attacks from the air and of submarines. So it was impossible to accumulate fuel or other supplies in the areas near the front. In practice it was possible to only maintain the supply of troops already located there. The same was true in relation to delivery from the air because the improvised air fields converted into swamps. When we stopped the offensive there in Tunis had been located 40 thousand Germans, not counting the Italians and Rommel, who was still located in Tripoli. The quantity of German forces now in Northern Tunis is twice as much as the number above, and they are transferring here who only is possible on transport air planes and by navy. At the end of last month there had been some failures, currently, however, the situation had been restored. We hope that the delay caused by those failures will be corrected by an earlier offensive by Montgomery's army which is supposed to include six divisions (about 200 thousand men) and which will start its operations from Tripoli with a sufficient quantity of weaponry against Maret's positions by end of March. Already on March 6 Montgomery's army beat off with heavy losses for the enemy preventive offensive of Rommel. British and American armies in Northern Tunis will coordinate their actions with Montgomery's operations.

6. I assumed, that You would like to get acquainted with those details, while the scale of those operations are small in comparison to the operations which You are managing.
7. The British headquarters assume that approximately a half of all the divisions which had been sent to the Soviet-German Front from France, Luxemburg, Belgium and Holland from November last year, had already been replaced by divisions from Russia and Germany and partly by new divisions formed in France. They assume that currently in France, Luxemburg, Holland and Belgium there are thirty divisions.
8. I want very much You to know exactly, in order of top secretive information for You, what are our military resources for the offensive on Europe through Mediterranean Sea or the Canal. The west majority of the British Army is located in Northern Africa, in the Middle East and in India, and there is no physical possibility to relocate it back by sea on the British Islands. By the end of April we will have in Northern Tunis five British divisions, or approximately 200 thousand men, in addition to General Montgomery's army containing six divisions. We also are transferring two especially prepared British divisions from Iran, are sending one division from here to enforce our troops there for "Eskimos" raising the total number of our troops to fourteen divisions. In the Middle East we have four motormechanised British divisions, two Polish divisions, one French division and one Greek division. In Gibraltar, on Malta and on Cyprus are located troops, equivalent to four usual infantry divisions. Without counting garrisons and border troops, in India were formed and are being formed ten or twelve divisions for recapturing Burma after the rein period and recuperation the contact with China (look for the conditional title of that operation in the message immediately following after this message). In summary we have under the British command located on the line from Gibraltar to Calcutta 6300 miles long thirty eight divisions, including powerful tank formations and a significant part of our aviation. To all those forces had been given specific tasks for the year of 1943, which foresee active operations.
9. The total quantity of a British division, including the troops who serve the rears, can be defined of approximately 40 thousand men. In Britain are left approximately nineteen divisions, four divisions of internal defense and four divisions for reinforcement; sixteen divisions out of the abovementioned are being prepared to crossing of the Canal in August. You have to remember that the total quantity of our population is 46 000 000, and that the majority of it is involved in the navy and in the merchant fleet, without which we would not be able to exist. Then are following our significant air forces with about 1 200 000 men and the needs in production of weaponry, agriculture and anti-air craft defense. So, already during a certain time period all men and women of the country had been and are being completely used.
10. The United States intended to send in July 1942 to Britain for invasion into France twenty seven divisions with the total quantity of 40 to 50 thousands men in each division. Since then they sent seven divisions for the "Torch" operation, and they will send there three more divisions. In Britain currently there is located only one American division, and at least in the nearest two months other troops are not expected. They hope to have by August four divisions in addition to significant air forces. This is not considered as a weakening of American efforts. The reason why

the last year expectations had not been achieved is not in absence of troops, but because we do not have in our possession tonnage and escorting means. There are no perspectives to transfer to the United Kingdom during the aforementioned period anything else to the abovementioned.

11. The bombarding offensive from the United Kingdom had been and is constantly developing. During February on Germany and occupied by it territories had been dropped over 10 thousand bombs, and 4 thousand bombs fell on Germany from the start of March. The headquarters of our aviation assumes that out of 4500 German military airplanes of the first line 1780 airplanes are now located on the Russian Front, and the rest are concentrated against us in Germany and on the western and Mediterranean fronts. In addition to that there are Italian military air craft forces in the quantity of 1385 airplanes of the first line, the majority of which is intended for actions against us.
12. Regarding the offensive on the other side of the Canal, I and the President seriously wish that our troops would participate in Europe in the general struggle, which You conduct with such an amazing heroism. But , in order to maintain operations in Northern Africa, in the Pacific Ocean and in India and to deliver supplies to Russia, the program of delivery to the United Kingdom had been cut to the limit, and we have been and are spending our reserves. However, if the enemy will be weakened enough, we are getting prepared to conduct a blow before August, and with that purpose the planes are being corrected every week. If the enemy will not be weakened, a premature offensive with forces of lower quality and insufficient quantity would lead only to a bloody failure, retaliation of the Nazis to the local population in case of its strike, and to a great celebration of the enemy. The real situation will be possible to evaluate closer to the corresponding moment, and when I am announcing for Your personal information about our intentions it is not to be understood as such that I am limiting our freedom in making decisions.

11 March 1943

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Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Marshal Stalin

In connection with my previous message:

- 1) The conditional title of the operation, mentioned under item 2, - "Vulcano".
- 2) The operation, mentioned under item 3, is directed against Cicely.
- 3) The conditional title of the operation, mentioned under item 8, - "Anakim".

11 March 1943

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Personal Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Marshal Stalin

I just saw an excellent movie about the victories of the Soviet Army near Stalingrad and about capturing Paulus and got a great pleasure from that movie. Front cameramen, attached to our 8th Army created a story of its victory in the desert. I authorized to translate the comments into the Russian Language, and am sending a copy of that movie to You hoping that You will find time to see it.

I am sure that officers and soldiers of the 8th army will be proud to know that their story of victorious struggle will be seen by their allies – the armed forces and the peoples of the Soviet Union.

11 March 1943

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Personal and Top Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Marshal Stalin

1. Regarding my last message, I want very much its items 8,9 and 10 to be considered as a separate message on the problem of military operations directed to You as to the Marshal and Supreme Commander. Let those items to be left between two of us.
2. Last night we undertook another air attack on Essen with a force of 400 airplanes losing 23 airplanes. But, according to reports, with good results. That attack followed almost immediately after the attacks on Stuttgart, Munich, Nuremberg and Essen. There is no doubt that those more often and of increasing power attacks have their influence on the moral condition of the Germans, and I expect that Hitler will be forced to give a message about a most powerful retaliation which he would be able to conduct. He is holding sufficient forces of the bombarding aviation in the west for their use in the coastal areas in the case of our landing. One of our purposes is to force him to introduce those forces into action against Great Britain, where we will meet him with great hospitality, and also in the task to clean up the way for future operations.
3. Cordial congratulations to You with regard to Vyas'ma. and I sincerely hope for the final success near Har'kov.

13 March 1943

XXXIX. 1943 - spring, summer and fall.

Spring made our existence more tolerable. We could go for "hunting" more frequently, and eat more often. The market place was becoming busier...

More of us - boys-brothers - could go for "hunting", but we still kept our unwritten law - to share our prey equally between all of us...

Late spring and summer gave us another source of survival in addition to the market place - vegetable gardens and fruit gardens.

Now in our menu would appear from time to time young garlic and onion, reddish, and even cucumbers. We investigated the area for vegetable- and fruit-gardens. We knew where dogs had been guarding the gardens, and avoided those places. We would penetrate into "safe" gardens, eat vegetables from vegetable beds and fruits from the trees.

We have survived, strengthened, became more resourceful and alert, ready to run, to hide, or to attack, a pack of little, but experienced wolves...

... In the fall, our group had been transferred to another location, where we joined other children. The room here was heated, but we still had to stay in beds because of lack of cloth.

Now, an adult was always present with us at this location. Food was rare - once per day - and very little, with no nutritional value. However, "hunting" was not permitted.

With the return of semi-hunger, and food without nutritional value, we were, again, attacked by all kind of diseases and infectious illnesses.

Scurvy was widely spread between us. Some of us had been affected by a severe form of that disease. Those would become delirious, losing their teeth, gums, and other facial tissues. They would moan day and night, not letting to sleep the rest of us. It was an awful picture seeing them so suffering and dying...

Some of us from the "old group", secretly decided to "rehabilitate" our "hunting". First, we started to escape, when our supervisor would go for his/her "natural needs". At that time, the "hunter" (or "hunters") would be able to escape through the door, and after "hunting" - to return through a window, again, with the supervisor being on a short leave.

But this was complicated: when the "hunters" would return, they (in many cases) would have to wait outside, suffering from the cold and exposed to danger, until the supervisor

would go to the toilet, and a rope could be lowered from an open window to pull them into our shelter...

The distribution of the prey was also complicated at such conditions: it had to be done, again, in the supervisor's absence. After a few such "huntings", we talked to the supervisors, and convinced them to allow us to do the "hunting"... Now, our existence started to become more promising, especially after successful "huntings"...

...Struggling and suffering from everything - fear, horror, hunger and poor nutrition, infectious illnesses and diseases, losses of friends and comrades, some of us survived the 1943-1944 winter...

Gathering and analyzing intelligence information (Central and Voronezh Fronts). Zjukov reports to Stalin his Plan. Building a deep echelon defensive. The Kursk Battle begins. Crash of the German general offensive. Zjukov coordinates actions of the Voronezh and Stepnoy fronts

Elsewhere in the world, G.K. Zjukov and A.M Vasilevskiy together with commanders of the fronts organized a number of measures regarding scrupulous intelligence of the enemy in the areas of the Central, Voronezh and Southern-Western Fronts.

A significant role in that undertaking played the Partisan movement as well as in annihilation of the enemy's reserves, cutting the enemy's communications and interruption of transportation of troops and weaponry.

In 1942 alone the enemy had been forced to dedicate almost 10% of its land troops from the Soviet-German Front against the partisans. In 1943 for the same purposes had been pulled formations of the SS and SD, 500,000 soldiers of auxiliary formations, more than 25 divisions of the acting army.

The troops of the fronts, each in their band of actions, conducted enforced aviation and combat intelligence. As a result at the beginning of April 1943 the Soviet Command possessed significantly complete information regarding the enemy's troops in the region of Oryol, Sumy, Belgorod and Har'kov. "After the analysis of that data,- Zjukov recalls,- and also the information, obtained from a wider front of military actions, and consideration of all of that with the commanders of the Voronezh and Central fronts and after that with A.M. Vasilevskiy, I have sent to Stalin the following report:

*"To Comrade Vasiliev (pseudonym of J.V. Stalin).
5.30 a.m. April 8, 1943.*

I am reporting my viewpoint concerning possible enemy's actions during spring and summer 1943, and considerations regarding our defensive battles for the nearest period.

- 1. The enemy experienced great losses during the winter campaign 1942/1943, most probably would not be able to generate by spring large reserves with the purpose to again undertake the offensive to capture Caucasus and outcome to Volga with the goal of deep detour of Moscow.*

Due to the limitation of large reserves the enemy would be forced in the spring and first half of the summer 1943 to unfold its actions on a narrower front and to solve the problem strictly in stages, having as the main purpose capture of Moscow.

Based on the current presence of the enemy's formations situated against our Central, Voronezh and Southern-Western Fronts, I think that the main offensive operations the enemy would unfold against those three fronts with the purpose to demolish our forces in that direction and obtain freedom of maneuver for detouring Moscow on the shortest direction.

- 2. It seems that on the first stage the enemy, after gathering maximum of its forces, including up to 13 - 15 tank divisions with the support of large quantity of aviation would inflict a blow with its Orlov-Kromsk Group in detour of Kursk from North-East and with its Belgorod-Har'kov Group in detour of Kursk from South-East.*

An auxiliary blow with the purpose of cutting our front it is necessary to expect from the West from the Vorozhba region, which is between the rivers Seym and Psel, to Kursk from Southwest...

- 3. At the second stage the enemy would try to come out to the flank and rear of the Southern-Western Front...*

Against that blow the enemy may inflict a blow from the Lisichansk region in the Northern direction to Svatovo-Urazovo.

In other areas the enemy would try to come out to the line Livny-Kastornoe-Stariy and Noviy Oskol.

- 4. At the third stage after certain regrouping the enemy, probably, would try to come out to the line Liski-Voronezh-Elets and, covering up in the Southern-Eastern direction, may organize a blow in detour of Moscow from South-East through Raneburg-Ryazansk-Ryazan'.*
- 5. It is necessary to expect that the enemy in the current year during offensive action would make the main accent on its tank divisions and airforce because its infantry is now weaker prepared to offensive actions than last year.*

Currently across the Central and Voronezh Fronts the enemy has up to 12 tank divisions, and pulling from other areas 3 - 4 tank divisions, can through against our Kursk Group up to 15 - 16 tank divisions with a total of up to 2,500 tanks.

6. In order to crash the enemy against our defense, in addition to measures of enforcement of the Anti-Tank Defense of the Central and Voronezh fronts, it is necessary as soon as possible to collect from the passive areas and relocate into the Reserve of the Supreme Command on the threatening directions 30 regiments of Destructive-Anti-Tank Artillery; all regiments of mobile artillery to concentrate in the area Livny-Kastornoe-Stariy Oskol. A part of the regiments it is preferable to immediately give for enforcement to Rokossowskiy and Vatutin, and to concentrate as much as possible airforce in the Reserve of the Supreme Command to have the possibility by massive blows of the airforce in cooperation with tanks and infantry formations to defeat the Blow groups and demolish the offensive plan of the enemy.

I am not familiar with the final location of our operative reserves. Because of that I consider appropriate to propose to locate them in the region Efremov-Livny-Kastornoe-Noviy Oskol-Valuyki-Rossosh-Liski-Voronezh-Elets. To locate deeper reserves in the region Ryazjsk, Ranenburg, Michurinsk, Tambov.

In the region Tula-Stalinogorsk it is necessary to have one reserve army.

It would be irrational to turn into offensive our troops in the nearest future. It would be better to first wear out the enemy on our defense, knock out their tanks, and then, after introduction of fresh reserves and turning into general offensive to finally annihilate the main group of the enemy.

Konstantinov (G.K. Zjukov's pseudonym)".

...In May and June 1943 all land and air forces in the region of the Kursk arch had been intensively preparing to the future battle. Every soldier and commander had been preparing to the meeting with the enemy.

And that meeting happened...

By all means of intelligence the Supreme Command found out the time of turning to the offensive of the enemy. On July 2, 1943 the Supreme Command warned the Commanders of the Fronts about the enemy's turning to the offensive between July 3 and 6, 1943.

Now the closest task appeared to be carrying out a powerful artillery and aviation counterpreparation by the Soviet forces.

"In the evening on July 4, 1943,- G.K. Zjukov recalls,- I had been in the Headquarters of K.K. Rokossowskiy. From radio communication with A.M. Vasilevskiy, located at the Headquarters of N.F. Vatutin, I already knew about the results of the battle with the vanguard formations of the enemy in the Belgorod region. It had been confirmed that the

enemy would turn into offensive on the dawn of July 5, 1943. And, as it had been planned by the Supreme Command, the Voronezh Front would conduct artillery and aviation counterpreparation. I immediately passed that information to K.K. Rokossowskiy and M.S. Malinin.

At the beginning of the third hour in the morning Rokossowskiy received a call from the Commander of the 13th Army General N.P. Puhov. He reported that a captive of the 6th Infantry division of the enemy informed about the readiness of the German troops to turn to the offensive at 3.00 a.m. on July 5, 1943.

Rokossowskiy asked me:

- *What are we going to do? Report to the Supreme Command or give an order for conducting the counterpreparation?*
- *We are not going to waste time, Konstantin Konstantinovich. Give the order, as it is foreseen by the plan of the Front and the Supreme Command. And I will call Stalin now.*

I had been immediately connected to Stalin. I informed him about the data obtained and about the decision to conduct the counterpreparation. Stalin approved the decision, and ordered to inform him more frequently.

-I will wait in the Supreme Command the development of the events,- Stalin said.

I felt,-Zjukov continues,- that the Supreme Commander is in a stressful state. And all of us, in spite of the fact that it had been built a deeply echelon defensive and we possessed Powerful means of blow against the German troops, had been very excited. It was deeply in the night, but sleep totally disappeared.

It is necessary to say that the Headquarters of the artillery and all commanders of the artillery of the fronts, armies and formations had well and smart organized the artillery defense and the counterpreparation.

At 2.20 a.m. had been given the order on the start of the counterpreparation. Everything came into motion, it appeared a horrible rumble - the greatest battle on the Kursk arch started. In that "Hell Symphony" sounded together the blows of the heavy artillery, explosions of aviation bombs, reactive shells of "Katyushas" and continuous noise of the aircraft engines.

At 2.30 a.m., when the counterpreparation was already in full swing, Stalin called.

- *Started?*
- *Started.*
- *How does the enemy behave?*

I reported,- Zjukov continues,- that the enemy tried to answer to our counterpreparation with separate batteries, but quickly became quiet.

- Good. I will call again.

It was hard to immediately define the results of our counterpreparation. But the enemy's offensive, which started at 5.30 a.m., had been not well organized and began not simultaneously. That had been a sign of serious losses, which the counterpreparation inflicted on the enemy.

The captives, captured during the battle, told that our blow had been for them absolutely unexpected. According to those witnesses, their artillery experienced great losses, and the systems of communication, observation and management almost everywhere had been interrupted.

However,-Zjukov continues,- should we have a more precise knowledge about the locations of the enemy's targets our blows would be directed against those targets instead of areas of their location. That allowed the enemy to avoid massive casualties. After 2 - 2.5 hours the enemy managed to turn to offensive. And during the first day, in spite of the high density of fire of our defense, advanced by 3 - 6 kilometers.

Should the counterpreparation be better organized the results could be better. However, because the counterpreparation had been conducted during the night the participation of the airforce had been insignificant and ineffective. The blows on the airports of the enemy did not reach their goals because to that time the German command already lifted their aviation into the air for interaction with their land forces.

Much more effective had been the actions of the aviation on the tactical combat orders and the regrouping columns of the enemy.

Between 5.00 and 5.30 a.m. on July 5, 1943 simultaneously with the appearance of the enemy's airforce their artillery attacked the defense of the Central Front, particularly strongly the forces of the 13th Army. Within a half an hour the German troops started the offensive.

The enemy thrown into the attack in the first attacking echelons three tank and five infantry divisions. The blow had been directed against the 13th Army and neighboring flanks of the 48th and 70th Armies. The attack had been met by powerful fire of the entire system of our defense,- G.K. Zjukov continues,- and beat off with losses for the enemy.

During the entire day of July 5 the enemy conducted five furious attacks trying to burst open our defense, however had not achieved significant results. Almost on all locations of the Front the troops firmly defended their positions. And only by the end of the day in the Ol'hovatka region and a couple other places the enemy's troops advanced into our defense by 3 - 6 kilometers.

Particularly manly fought the fighters of the 13th Army including the 81st Division of General A.B. Barinov, the 15th Division of Colonel V.N. Dzjandzjgava, the 307 Division of General M.A. Enshin and the 3rd Anti-tank annihilating artillery brigade of Colonel V.N. Rukosuev.

Courageously fought the 70th Army of General I.V. Galanin, formed from well-prepared border fighters of the Far East, Baikal Region and Middle Asia.

In the evening, - Zjukov continues, - it had been decided to introduce into the battle next morning, i.e. on July 6, 1943, the 2nd Tank Army and reserved 19th Tank corps which were supposed together with the forces of the 13th Army to inflict a counterblow and to reestablish the entire defense system in the area of the 13th Army.

Especially courageously fought the fighters of the 17th Guardian Infantry corps. The 203rd Guardian Infantry Regiment under the command of Major V.O. Konovalenko during July 6 beat off 16 attacks of the enemy and inflicted on it heavy losses.

However, in spite of the great courage and massive heroism of the Soviet forces, during July 5 and 6 the enemy troops experiencing great losses managed, in separate areas to advance by up to 10 kilometers. Both days, experiencing colossal losses, raged the enemy's airforce. However, to burst open the tactical defense of the Front the enemy was not able.

After regrouping its blow tank formations the enemy in the morning of July 7, 1943 started a fierce attack on Ponyri. Here had been defending the 307th Infantry division of General Enshin enforced with the 5th Artillery division, 13th Anti-tank artillery brigade and 11th and 22nd Mortar brigades.

The entire day lasted a fierce land and air battle in the Ponyri area. The enemy threw into the combat continuously new tank formations. However, here they could not break the defense.

On July 8, 1943 the enemy enforced their attacks in the Ol'hovatka direction. The enemy met here heroic withstanding of the soviet fighters. Particularly well fought artillery fighters of the 3rd Anti-tank annihilating brigade of Colonel Rukosuev. The brigade conducted unequal battle against 300 tanks of the enemy.

The consequent attempts of the enemy to burst open the defense of the Soviet troops had not been successful.

During the aforementioned battles, in the morning of July 9, 1943, - Zjukov recalls, - Stalin called me to the Command Station of the Central Front, and after getting familiar with the situation, asked:

- Isn't it now the time to introduce into the business the Bryanskiy Front and the left wing of the Western Front, as it had been foreseen in the Plan?

- *Here, in the area of the Central Front, the enemy does not possess anymore the power, capable of bursting the defense of our troops,- Zjukov responded.- In order to prevent the enemy from organizing the defense, to which it would be forced to turn, it is necessary to immediately turn to offensive with all forces of the Bryanskiy Front and the left wing of the Western Front. Without that the Central Front would not be able to successfully conduct the planned counteroffensive.*
- *Agree. Move to Popov and introduce into the business the Bryanskiy Front. When would be possible to start the offensive of the Bryanskiy Front?*
- *The twelfth.*
- *Agree.*

I had been well aware,- Zjukov continues,- of the situation on the Voronezh Front, and knew that there had also unfolded an extremely fierce battle. At 16.10 p.m. on July 4, 1943 the enemy started offensive actions with advanced formations. Those actions, apparently, had been of scouting character. On July 5, 1943 after artillery and aviation blow the enemy turned into offensive from the region Streletskiy-Tomarovka-Zybino-Trefilovka with not less than 450 tanks.

The first attack had been beaten off.

In the second part of the day the enemy introduced into the battle heavy tanks "Tiger" and captured a number of populated areas including Berezov, Gremuchiy, Bykovo, and Voznesenskiy.

During the day of battle colossal losses had been inflicted on the enemy. However, the troops of the Voronezh Front lost up to 60 tanks, 78 airplanes and significant number of men. From the analysis of the enemy's actions could be seen that in the Belgorod region their troops had been under command of more experienced and with better initiative generals. That was really so. That Group had been under command of General-Fieldmarshal Manshtein.

The events on the Bryanskiy Front,- G.K. Zjukov recalls,- unfolded as follows. In the evening on July 9, 1943, as Stalin had ordered it, I was in the Headquarters of the Front, where I met the Front Commander M.M. Popov, Member of the Front Military Council L.Z. Mehlis and Chief of Headquarters L.M. Sandalov.

... After lengthy considerations,- Zjukov continues,- we all decided to start the attack not after the artillery preparation, as it had been until now and helped the enemy to define the beginning of turning our forces into offensive, but in the process of artillery preparation, at the moment of culmination its tempo and power. That method proved to be very effective.

On July 12, 1943 Bryanskiy Front and enforced 11th Army of the Western Front turned into offensive. In spite on the deeply echelon well engineeringly developed offense and stubborn resistance of the enemy the Front forces burst it open, and started advancing in the direction of Oryol.

As it had been expected, the enemy started to take off their troops from the group, which acted against the Central Front, throwing them against the Bryanskiy Front and against the 11th Guardian Army of the Western Front. The Central Front immediately took advantage on that situation, and on July 15, 1943 turned into counteroffensive.

So, here in the Oryol region, Hitler's General Offensive, which had been for so long in preparation, had finally been crashed.

However, in the Belgorod region the enemy still had been inflicting powerful blows. On July 6, 1943 a fierce battle unfolded in the direction to Oboyan'. On both sides participated simultaneously hundreds of aircraft, tanks and mobile artillery installations. The enemy could not overthrow the offensive of the Soviet forces. Only during July 6, 1943 the enemy lost here over 200 tanks, tens of thousands of soldiers and about 100 combat airplanes.

The troops of the Voronezh Front, which fought with powerful support of the airforce, did not let the enemy to burst through the second strip of the defense. However, in some places the enemy had advanced.

Because of that the Front's Command introduced here, now dangerous area, the 2nd and 5th Guardian Tank Corps, and a few infantry divisions plus artillery formations, relocated from other directions.

During two days the enemy lost additionally not less than 200 tanks and a lot of other weaponry. After regrouping its main forces on a narrower area on July 10, 1943 the enemy throw them again in the Prohorovka direction, hoping to smash the weakened Soviet forces. During July 11, 1943 continued a heavy battle on the Prohorovka direction.

By the end of the day, - G.K. Zjukov recalls, - in the area of the Voronezh Front appeared a dangerous crisis. The Supreme Command pulled from its reserve into the Prohorovka region the 5th Guardian Army and the 5th Guardian Tank Army, and in the morning of July 12 introduced them into the battle. The later had in its possession over 800 tanks and mobile artillery installations. The enemy had had in the Prohorovka and Oboyan' directions not less than that of the Soviet side. However, the fighting spirit of its troops had been crashed.

During July 12, 1943 on the Voronezh Front continued the most fierce battle, particularly fierce in the Prohorovka direction, where most successfully acted the 5th Guardian Tank Army under command of General P.A. Rotmistrov.

On that day,- Zjukov further recalls,- Stalin called me on the Command Station of the Bryanskiy Front and ordered to immediately fly into the Prohorovka region and coordinate the actions of the Voronezh and Stepnoy Fronts.

...On all areas of the fronts lasted bloody battles. Hundreds of tanks and mobile artillery installations had been burning. The battlefield was covered with smoke and dust. This was the breaking point in the battle on the Belgorod direction.

...In the battle near Kursk the troops of the Central and Voronezh fronts had some advantage over the enemy: in manpower - by 1.4 times, in guns and mortars - by 1.9 times, in tanks - by 1.2 times, in aircraft - by 1.4 times. However, focusing on tanks and motorized forces, the German command grouped them in narrow areas, and established during the first days of the battle significant advantage over the Soviet troops.

When later had been activated the Soviet forces, located in the operational depth, the superiority passed into the hands of the Soviet forces... (Map)

The battle in the region of Kursk, Oryol and Belgorod is one of the greatest battles of the Great Patriotic War and WWII as a whole. Here, not only had been defeated the selected and the most powerful German forces, but also undermined in the German army and population the trust in Hitler's Fascists management, and the ability of Germany to withstand the growing power of the Soviet Union...

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Sent 15 March 1943

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister I. V. Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. W. Churchill

!2 March 1943 American Ambassador Mr. Stanly passed to Mr. Molotov the following message of the USA Government.

The USA Government proposes to play the role of a mediator between the USSR and Finland with the purpose to clarify the possibility of a separate peace between them. When asked by Mr. Molotov whether the American Government knows that Finland wants peace and what is its real position in that area, Mr. Stanly said that he can not say anything about that.

As it is known, the British-Soviet Agreement of 26 May 1942 foresees, that our countries would not lead negotiations about making separate peace neither with Germany, nor with its allies otherwise than by our mutual agreement. I proceed from that as from an immutable condition.

Because of that, I considered as my duty, firstly, to inform You about the American proposal, and, secondly to ask You about Your opinion on that matter.

I don't have any basis to think, that Finland really wants peace, that it already decided to break up with Germany and is ready to propose acceptable conditions. Finland, perhaps, had not yet break away from Hitler's clutches, if it really wants to break away. The

current leaders of Finland, who undersigned a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, and then annihilated it and attacked in unity with Germany the Soviet Union, is hardly capable of breaking away from Hitler.
Never the less in view of the proposal of the USA Government I considered as my duty to inform You about the aforementioned.

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Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister I. V. Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. W. Churchill

Your messages of 6 and 13 March with the information about successful bombarding of Essen, Stuttgart, Munich and Nuremberg I received. I congratulate from my entire soul The British aviation, which is developing bombarding blows on German industrial centers.

Your wish to consider paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of Your message of 11 March as a special military information will be executed.

Thank You for the greetings regarding capturing Vyas'ma. Unfortunately, today became necessary to evacuate Har'kov.

As soon as we will receive Your film about the 8th Army, about which You are informing in Your special message of 11 March, I will necessarily acquaint myself with it and will provide a broad possibility to acquaint with that movie our army and population. I understand how it will be valuable for our military concord. Let me to send to You personally our soviet movie "Stalingrad".

15 March 1943

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Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister I. V. Stalin to Prime Minister Mr. W. Churchill

Received Your answer to my message of 16 February.

From Your information it is seen that British-American operations in Northern Africa not only do not accelerate, but are being delayed already to the end of April. And even this date is not indicated very definitely. So, at the very stressful period of the battles against Hitler's troops, in the period of February – March, the British – American offensive in Northern Africa not only had not been enforced, but was not conducted at all, and the dates which You Yourself planned for that offensive had been delayed. Meanwhile Germany already managed to transport from the West against the Soviet troops 36 divisions, 6 of which are tank divisions. It is easy to understand what difficulties that generated for the Soviet Army and how it eased the German situation on the Soviet-German Front.

With all the importance of the “Eskimos” operation, it will definitely not replace by itself the opening of the Second Front in France, but I, understandably, am greeting the planned acceleration of that operation.

As before, I consider as the main question – acceleration of the opening of the Second Front in France. As You remember, You assumed the opening of the Second Front still in 1942, and at least not later than in the spring of this year. There had been for that sufficiently serious motives. It is understandable, therefore, that in the previous message I emphasized the necessity to conduct the blow from the West not later than in the spring or the beginning of summer this year.

After the Soviet troops conducted the entire winter the most stressful battles and still continue to do it now, and Hitler is conducting large operations for recuperation and increasing of his army for the spring and summer operations against the USSR, it is especially important for us that the blow from the West not be delayed anymore and that this blow would be conducted in the spring or at the beginning of summer.

I got acquainted with Your arguments, introduced in items 8, 9 and 10, which characterize the obstacles for British – American operations in Europe. I recognize those obstacles. And in spite of that, I consider necessary to warn with complete persistence, from the view point of our joint business, about the serious danger of further delay in the opening of the Second Front in France. Because of that the uncertainty of Your statements regarding the planned British- American offensive on the other side of the Canal generates in me anxiety which I can not pass over in silence.

15 March 1943

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**Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill
to Marshal Stalin**

1. Thank You for Your telegram of 15 March regarding contacting You of the Americans about Finland.
2. You Yourself will be able to better judge about the great military influence in the struggle against the Germans on Your front would have the withdrawal of Finland from the war. I assume that as a result of that it would become available for the use in other areas of the front significantly more soviet divisions than German divisions. In addition to that, the break up of Finland with the axle could have a significant influence on other Hitler’s satellites.
3. Isolation of the most pro-German ministers of Finland from the new government, seems, introduces by itself a compromise to public opinion, and, perhaps, witnesses the willingness to demonstrate the independency from German control. So it is possible that this is a preparation stage to the re-orientation Finish politics, when it will be recognized that the time has come. While my own information, which is not complete, makes me think that the Finns, perhaps, are not yet ready for negotiations, I still consider that events on Your front during the nearest few months will decide that question for them. I assume that they depend on the

supply of grain, which the Germans promised to deliver during the period between now and the month of May. After the delivery of those supplies, Finland, perhaps, will be able to exist without the German deliveries of food to the end of the year.

4. Generally speaking, I would assume, that the Finns very much would like to withdraw from the war, as soon as they would be convinced that Germany would be defeated. If that is so, it seems to me that in general it would not be premature, if You would ask the United States Government if it knows or if it could clarify without uncovering Your interest, what conditions the Finns would be ready to accept. But You Yourself best of all will be able to judge about the correct tactics.

20 March 1943

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Personal and Secretive Operational Message from Prime Minister Mr. Winston Churchill to Marshal I. V. Stalin

1. Our major battle in Tunis is now in full swing. American offensive from the West started 17 March. During the night of 20 March the 8th Army attacked the enforced positions of Mareth and currently is developing through them in the Northern-Western direction. Simultaneously the New Zealand Army Corp by use of powerful tank formations and by a detour maneuver, the length of which is over 150 miles, arrived in the rear of the enemy approximately 30 miles to the West from Gabes. That Corp is reporting about its movement to Gabes, which is its goal. Inside of the closing circuit we have about 70 000 Germans and 50 000 Italians, however it is too early to assume what is going to happen. You will be able to judge on the map about existing opportunities. I will keep You updated.
2. Ten days of fog on the airfields of England delayed our air offensive. It will begin again with increased power as soon as the weather will improve. I am sending to You a few photographs, showing the results of destructions, specifically in Essen. I assume that You would like those photographs as much as I like them.

23 March 1943

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Sent 27 March 1943

Personal and Secretive Message from Prime Minister I. V. Stalin to

Prime Minister Mr. W. Churchill

Your message regarding the ongoing in Tunis major battle received. I wish the British and American troops complete and fast success. Hope that now You will be able to crash the enemy, kicking it out completely from Tunis. Hope that the air offensive on Germany will be continuously increasing. Will be thankful for sending me the photos showing the destructions in Essen.

`# 133

To Marshal I. V. Stalin, Chairman of The Council Of The Peoples Commissars and Peoples Commissar of Defense

Respected Marshal Stalin,

I assigned General-Lieutenant G. le K. Martel, cavalier of the Bany order of Third degree, Order For Military Merits, Cross For Military Merits as the Head of the British Military Mission in the Soviet Union.

General Martel is a general of a high rank, who possessed high positions in the British Army, was a division commander in France before Dunkirk and recently was Commander of the Kingdom's Tank-Armored Forces. I specifically selected him for this position because I think that he possesses the necessary qualities military as well as personal which You and the Soviet Military Authorities will like, and which will provide success of his mission. Sending to the Soviet Union an outstanding officer with a remarkable service record, I am emphasizing the great importance, which I put on the tight cooperation between our countries, and I present into Your service one of my best officers, who I am asking You to render complete trust. He already in 1936 had the possibility to see the Red Army during maneuvers and now is hoping to renew the acquaintance with it in the severe challenges of the war. I hope that You will give the necessary instructions that will provide the possibility for him to achieve that goal.

Sincerely Yours

Winston Churchill

27 March 1943

It will still be a long-long way before Stalin's goal of this correspondence – the Opening of the Second Front in Europe by Britain and the USA will be achieved.

And it will take a total of THREE LONG YEARS between the first promise of Britain and the US in July 1941 to open the Second Front and its actual opening in June 1944.

This would cost the peoples of the USSR a staggering sacrifice of 27 MILLION killed in battles, or during bombings and shelling, or lost without a trace during deportations, or annihilated in ghettos and concentration camps...

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XL. Spring 1944 - Liberation!!!

... The early part of the 1944 spring was cold and anxious. One could notice an increased activity of the Nazis, moving armor and troops through Mogilyov. Day and especially nights, the railroad bridge over the Dniester River was vibrating from endless movement (in both directions) of heavy and long trains.

Nazi soldiers and officers appeared more frequently in the streets of the ghetto, especially near and in the reactivated industrial plants, affiliated with the repair of military equipment and production of military supply.

Of course, the Nazis appeared also in the market place. That had made our "hunting" increasingly difficult. Now, not only we (the "hunters") would have to be able to escape from the chasing of the produce owners when being chased, but also keep an eye on the rest of the creatures of "good will"...

Because of the increased stressful situation, and because of open robbery from the Nazis, the Ukrainian peasants were less willing to bring their goods to the market place...

... We started to hear (first at night, then at any time of the day) heavy bombing and shelling. First it was very remote. But then, day after day it started to be heard more clearly and loudly. This filled our little hearts with great joy, celebration and hope. There had been no doubts in our minds: the Soviet Army was victoriously approaching...

... We heard horrible stories about Nazis' retaliations to the civil population while they had been retreating. Our supervisors were scared, that this might happen to us. They decided to take preventive measures.

It had been a deep basement underneath of our building. From the street the basement could actually not be seen. The only way into that basement from inside the building was through an opening in the wooden floor. This opening was always closed. From the basement lead a steel door, facing outside a steep rocky hill, covered with rocks, bushes and trees. That door could not be seen from the street.

We had been instructed and trained by our supervisors how to quickly escape into this basement and from it in case of a "critical necessity". Over the floor opening into the

basement was always placed a dirty piece of rug and a bed... Every time a suspicious noise appeared outside near our shelter, we had been escaping into the basement...

One night the shelling was especially heavy. Suddenly, everything became calm and quiet...

In the morning, we saw through the windows a few youngsters - local partisans - walking down the street with rifles in their hands. In a short while after that, tanks and soldiers of the Soviet Army occupied the streets...

Our little hearts had been overflowed with joy...

... It was still cold outside. And we still did not have cloth. A few soldiers came in into our shelter. They kept the very little ones on their laps, and had been surrounded by older children... We - the 9, 10 years and older children were outside of the circle, surrounding the soldiers...

The supervisors had been telling the soldiers our horrible stories of survival. The soldiers did not have much food to give to us. This came later...

Now, it was a celebration of victory, retaliation, tiers and joy... We were waiting for it for three endless horrible bloody years...

...Now a huge and powerful living wall had protected us, *unstoppably moving toward the cradle of EVEL...*

*...It would take another long year of bloody battles before **the hordes of HUMANLOOKING creatures from the Jurassic era, armed with contemporary weaponry, would be crashed and smashed...***

*Newer before in history had one country committed **SO MUCH AND SUCH UNIMAGINABLE CRIME** against the peoples in so many countries as did "the great Germany"...*

*Never before had **IDIOTIZM - political, state and national - reached such CATASTROPHIC PROPORTIONS** as it did in "the great Germany"...*

...Millions of fighters of the Soviet Army (and hundreds of thousands from other countries) would give their lives for the liberation of their motherland and the European peoples.

...Millions of innocent people would still be annihilated in the extermination and concentration camps over the entire Europe - all "thanks" to "the great Germany" ... (Map).

XLI. "Who will come with a sword - will die from a Sword"...

...Within approximately next 3 months Mogilyov had been heavily and frequently bombed by the Nazis. For a couple months our - now an orphanage - had been even evacuated into a village, located not far away from Mogilyov. However, when the bombing started to slow down, we returned to Mogilyov.

After all the horrors, which we survived, the bombing, while life threatening, did not produce any fear in us. We felt, we knew it for sure, that the ugly loathsome snake is going to be crashed and smashed sooner or later...

...In one of those summer days, on the porch of our orphanage appeared a young lady, asking for me. I quickly recognized my 17 years old aunt Mal'vina, who had been contused and evacuated together with my grandmother Rose during the unforgettable night of our Armageddon...

... The 17 years old Mal'vina traveled thousands of kilometers in very dangerous, life threatening situations, changing trains, with very little money and food, under the bombing of the Nazis, risking her life to pick me up and bring to the rest, of what was left of our immediate family, i.e., my grandmother Rose and another aunt. They lived together in one room with another family, i.e. a mother and a daughter.

Nobody else was available in our family to pick me up... My grandmother Rose was totally invalid since the Armageddon night. My other aunt Mindel, in accordance with the wartime employment law, was supposed to mandatory work as any other healthy adult, who was not serving in the Soviet Army. My mother was in jail. Before she had been jailed, she worked as the principal accountant of a kolkhoz. Every member of the kolkhoz, in addition to working in the kolkhoz, was obligated by the Soviet Government to supply a certain amount of grain from their personal plots. This law was very strict and severe: even a shortage of a few kilograms from the established quote could lead to imprisonment of the "guilty" person, who could not, or did not fulfil his obligation to the government.

Often, the kolkhozniks would give up their last reserves, exposing their children, their elderly and themselves to hunger. The list of the kolkhozniks with the data, indicating

their fulfillment of that obligation, was in my mother's possession. Knowing, how those people and their children are suffering, my mother did not want them to suffer even more. And when she was told, that a group of auditors is coming to their kolkhoz to inspect the fulfillment of the obligation by the kolkhozniks, she burned the list, which showed, who fulfilled and who did not fulfill their obligations. For that she was jailed, and now she was in the Children's Labor Colony, located in Ulyanovsk City (place of Lenin's birth), working (as previously) as an accountant.

... Since I did not see my mother after my reunion with the family after all those horrible years, and, naturally, she and I were missing each other very much, my aunt Mindel decided to take a few days of vacation, and visit my mother.

There was no railroad, or buses between the little town Yazykovo-Kalinino, where we lived, and Ulyanovsk City, where my mother was located. Dirt roads lead from one village to another through mostly wooded areas.

The winter with deep snow, temperatures far below freezing and often strong winds, was already there. The only our transportation were our own legs. The distance between Yazykovo-Kalinino and Ulyanovsk City was 75 kilometers.

We figured that we would be able to cover that distance within two days, as most travelers from Yazykovo to Ulyanovsk normally did. Should we catch a passing truck, that time could be significantly reduced.

... We started to walk early in the morning, when the snow was still blue from the moon. And for the first day (according to my aunt) we covered more than a half of the distance in spite of the strong wind, which was blowing mostly into our back, helping us to pull the sledges.

When it started to get dark, we approached the next nearest village on our way, and asked for overnight lodging by a woman, who was shoveling snow near her house. She immediately agreed, and invited us into her roomy and warm house.

She was very hospitable, and offered us a hot meal, and a comfortable place to sleep on a Russian oven. The conversation, of course, was about the war... She already lost one son in the war. But two other sons were still alive, and fighting the Nazis...

My aunt told her in short my survival story. She was shocked, and for the rest of the evening, when she looked at me, she would shake her head with an expression of deep sorrow on her face...

... Early next morning, we thanked our hostess, left the hospitable house, and continued our journey through the snow and wind. A few hours later a large passing by truck with chains on all its wheels stopped near us, and the driver offered to give us a ride to Ulyanovsk. We gladly and thankfully accepted the offer, and in a couple minutes we were sitting in the open body of that truck.

In a short while, the truck came out of the forest, onto a wide plane with a few roads on it. There was significant truck traffic on those roads: one could sense approaching to a heavily industrial city.

... We observed the area from the top of our truck, and noticed ahead on the right side of our road something strange: rectangular piles, some of which were burning. We also noticed a small group of people, making those piles. It did not look, that the piles are being made of logs... Our truck approached the first pile still in work, and distanced from our road by about twenty meters. The pile was being made from corps of frozen Nazis...

Our driver stopped the truck, and approached a couple demobilized invalid soldiers, working on the piles. He offered to them a coarse tobacco, and said: "This is not the most cheerful job"... The older soldier kept silent for a moment, and then replied: "Nobody invited them here. They got what they came for". And after a couple more minutes soberly added: "We need to finish this job before it warms up, otherwise the stink will be unimaginable"...

...Instead of an Epilogue

... Only a **Few** monsters - so called "military criminals" - had been accused and prosecuted with **LAUGHABLE punishment** by the Nuremberg Process, while involved in the **CATASTROPHIC BLOODY BRUTALITIES** had been

the ENTIRE Germany...

With only a **FEW** exceptions...

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